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THE
BRAZEN MASK.

A Romance.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.



BY

MRS. CHARLOTTE PUTNEY,

AUTHOR OF CORA, &c.

As by degrees, from long, though gentle rains,
Great floods arise, and overflow the plains :
So men from little faults to great proceed,
Guilt grows on guilt, and crimes do crimes succeed. WANDESFORD.

VOL. IV.



L O N D O N :

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BRAZEN MASK

AURORA had no sooner pointed with her rosy fingers at the window of Elvira than she hastened to the couch of Orlando, who in a few minutes awakened, and seemed calm, though his recollection was evidently confused, as he took the hand of Elvira, saying—"Mother, I have dreamed that Adela is false, and fancied myself in a vault; where I saw her give her hand to one of her father's servants, and can swear I could hear her say, she should think herself blessed in having such a protector as Jacobo."

"The cause of your uneasiness is explained," said Jacobo. "Had you said

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this

this much before, I could have eased your mind, and cleared the spotless conduct of your sister."

Orlando appeared perplexed; for he had not till that moment perceived Jacobo was present; and looking earnestly in Elvira's face, said—"Mother, do I still dream? or is what I heard really true? and has Adela *indeed* taken Jacobo for her *protector*?"

"My son, it cannot be," answered Elvira; "some fatal delusion has taken possession of your mind: you must not wrong our Adela by such base suspicions as these; they are unworthy the generous mind of my much-esteemed Orlando."

"And yet," said he, "I heard her speak those words."

"You did," replied Jacobo; "and I will tell you what led her to say those very words, which have caused such uneasiness. If you have ever loved, don Orlando, you may be able faintly

to

to guess my feelings, when I saw the object of my first affections lie weltering in her blood, beneath the swords of the count and don De Torza. Madness did not seize my brain, for that had been bliss to what I suffered; nor is it in my power to depict what I then felt. Suffice it to say, revenge strung every nerve in my body; but love for my Felicia swelled my heart, and was the stronger passion of the two, or I had ere this made you fatherless. Love drew me to the remains of my mistress, when I washed her death-wound with my tears; and tried to console myself with the idea, that when I had in some measure wept my grief away, I would revenge my loss on her destroyers.

“ The night after the funeral, I never quitted the coffin which contained my all, nor the day following, and probably should have remained till death had kindly set me free, to join the spirit of my love, had I not been roused by a visitor,

who descended through the trap, and in the purest, most plaintive accents, bewailed Felicia's untimely end. Sweet mourner! how did her regrets fall like balm upon my wounded heart! She loved—though in a different degree—the same object that I did; and lamented—but in more Christian-like terms—the unfortunate death of her young friend. Perceiving the person was a female, I resolved not to discover myself, lest I should alarm her. She did more than pour forth her feelings in vain regrets—she even prayed for the repose of my Felicia's soul. Then it was I forgot my determination; filled with gratitude, I started up to thank her for her prayers, and found the mourner to be your sister. What return could I make for kindness such as this? what had I to bestow that would be an equivalent? Nothing.—But all I could do, I instantly did, and swore, over the remains of my beloved, to devote the rest
of

of my life to the service of the lady Adela.

“She thanked me for my offers of friendship, and likewise thanked me for respecting the memory of her, whose loss she mourned.

‘Then, for her sake, promise me,’ said I, ‘that if cruel necessity should ever leave you in want of a protecting arm, you will not scorn mine, should it be stretched to defend you.’

‘Never, never,’ replied your sister; and added, she should think herself blessed in having such a protector.

“These words you must have overheard, don Orlando, which have stung you to the soul, though they were as innocently spoken as if they had been uttered by the lips of a seraph.”

“I know it—I am convinced of it,” said Orlando, holding out his hand; “Adela cannot err, and I only am to blame; from henceforth I shall covet your friendship.”

Jacobo respectfully took the hand of his young master, and bowing said, he would not betray such confidence. He begged to retire to his favourite vault, which had more charms for him than the Alhambra of the king of the Moors.

As he withdrew, Orlando said—"What an example is that faithful slave for me! when shall I conquer the rashness of my nature, which I have struggled with from childhood? it was this which used to give uneasiness to the kind-hearted Mezenza, and it was this evil propensity which led me sometimes to fear I was the son of De Torza."

Paulo did not let this opportunity pass without descanting on the immorality of giving way to our irritated feelings; but was not severe, knowing that conviction had already fastened on the conscience of his young auditor.

Adela had in the mean time arisen, and gently tapped at the door, which was opened by Elvira, who with a smile
led

led her to the couch of Orlando. He took her hand, saying—"My beloved Adela——"

The crimson blush mantled on her cheek, as she interrupted him, exclaiming—"You are better, Orlando? then Heaven has heard my prayer!"

"And do I deserve the prayers of such a saint as thee?" he asked, kissing her hand, which he still held.

"Is it not natural for me to pray most for those I love best?" demanded Adela. A second blush of a deeper dye than the first spread over her fine neck and face the moment these words escaped her lips; and she would have recalled them, but knew not how: she attempted an excuse, stammered, and remained confused.

Orlando's eyes sparkled with delight, as he gazed on her. Elvira gave a turn to the conversation, while Paulo saw and approved the growing flame between two beings he had helped to rear, with

the same paternal solicitude as if they had been his own children. After prescribing for his patient, he took his leave, observing—"Adela must now try her skill in restoring Orlando, and I shall not be surprised if her success is greater than mine."

Orlando repaid the good man with a smile, as he left them to pay his intended visit to the abbot.

Happiness seemed to reign in the little family of Elvira, for her children were free from the danger which lately threatened them. Orlando, now that peace was returned to his mind, was unusually gay. Adela was rejoiced to see him so unexpectedly restored, and tried her skill with such success, as to make her patient acknowledge she bore the palm away from father Paulo; and Annette was sure to be happy when her mistresses were so.

This felicity remained uninterrupted till Adela had one morning strolled into
her

her little garden, and was seated on a bank under the shade of a row of orange trees with her favourite dove, which was nestling in her bosom, when Orlando appeared. He stood a minute unobserved, envying the dove its resting-place.—

“Ah,” said he to himself, “I would give worlds to be transformed into that little nestler! to riot there in the bosom of perfection.” Unable longer to witness the happiness he envied, he took the beautiful flutterer from its mistress, saying—“This is not fair, Adela, to suffer this enviable creature thus to monopolize felicity.”

“Orlando!” Adela exclaimed.

He stood, silently contemplating her matchless form. Finding he was mute, she said—“Surely Orlando does not envy the happiness of others?”

“I do,” he answered; “I envy the felicity of this little usurper, to madness—even to jealousy.”

“Shame on you!” ejaculated the be-

witching maid, "I did not think you capable of harbouring so much evil."

"Blame yourself, from whence the cause such evil springs," said Orlando: "blame those lustre-beaming eyes, where Cupids keep perpetual dance—blame those witching smiles, that play around thy coral lip—blame that sylph-like form, which seems made to wing its aerial flight to Heaven—blame——"

"Such language as *this* is blamable, indeed," said Adela, interrupting him; "leave me, I entreat you!"

"Oh, Adela," he replied, "the meaning is explained in one word, namely—*love*!"

"Withdraw," said Adela, frowning.

"Not covered with your frowns," he answered; "not till I have obtained my pardon: I know, I see, I feel my offence, in using language which *you* will call flattery; but it is hard to witness thy matchless beauties, and not to name them!"

"No

“No more of this,” she exclaimed; “but give me back my favourite, and once more I beg you will retire.”

“Go then,” said he, addressing the dove, “thou enviable, happy being! go, clothe thyself with the smiles of thy lovely mistress, while I am covered with her frowns! go, and obtain my pardon.”

He liberated the dove, which instantly flew to the bosom of its mistress, and there sought its accustomed shelter. To describe the feelings of Orlando at this moment, as the dove and the mistress embraced each other, is impossible. Her affection was all he coveted on earth, and he had thrown it from his reach, by wounding her chaste mind with that which good sense always led her to despise — flattery. — “Adela,” said he, kneeling, “remember this is my first offence.”

She waved her hand as she arose, and silently passed him.

He stood the statue of despair, look-

ing after her till she was out of sight—then throwing himself on the bank she had just quitted—“Fool that I was,” he exclaimed, “to wound the innate delicacy of her mind, by giving way to the violence of my feelings! When, when shall I cease to deplore that hastiness, which has always been my bane! Yet who could know her perfections as I do, and be rational! There dwells not on earth her equal, either in mind or person; and knowing this, why did I give way to my mad rhapsody—why disgust her ears with adulation, which her calm judgment would spurn? Yet methinks, did Adela love me as she was wont to do, she could not have spurned me as she has done. There was a time (but that time, alas! will ne’er return), when unreserved affection beamed from those speaking eyes, and kindled in my heart a flame, which time cannot extinguish; for ere I could define the passion, I loved, yet innocently loved, to adoration!

tion! Then it was, her regard, unfettered by restraint, seemed to keep pace with my own—then it was, she looked upon me as her brother, and modesty had not told her to conceal her lover, but that tie dissolved, the soft passion evaporated with it, and she can now see my flame unmoved! By Heaven, there must be some secret cause for this—there must be some hidden object of delight, to change her nature thus, and make her frown where she was wont to smile!”

How long Orlando’s soliloquy would have lasted is uncertain, had he not been roused by the voice of Jacobo, who inquired for him at the monumental door, and was directed by Annette to seek him in the garden. There she has done.

The purport of Jacobo’s visit arose from intelligence respecting the count and De Torza.

From the time of Felicia’s death, the sufferings of the count arose to agony, for want of those tender attentions,

which

which while she personated a nurse, she had bestowed on his shattered arm. It is not to be presumed that she really loved the count, but compassion taught her to pity what he endured from his fractured limb ; and the natural goodness of her own heart made her hope gratitude would bind him to her when she had performed the cure, and in some measure palliate her temerity, in clandestinely drawing him into a marriage. But Felicia knew not the count, who was a stranger to that feeling the most ferocious beast, the most untaught savage, have given way to—for the count never knew what gratitude was. His increased sufferings were looked upon with indifference by nearly all the domestics of De Torza, who whispered among themselves, that it was a judgment on him for his unkindness to poor Felicia : yet there was one who could not be an indifferent spectator, who was Jacobo, and might be said to rejoice in
the

the agonies he witnessed, though such a feeling is repugnant to the doctrines of Christianity; but he had not yet stifled his revenge, so as to look on the murderer of his peace with kinder sentiments. As Jacobo's office had been principally to obey the orders of Felicia and her mother; but as death had removed them both, and he had not had another post assigned him, he divided his time between his favourite vault, which contained the ashes of his love, and watching the conduct of the count and De Torza, through the painting on glass of St. Cecilia, in the apartment so lately occupied by Melina and her daughter. It was through this painting that Jacobo saw and heard sufficient to discover part of their plans. He had promised protection to Adela, and the grateful wish to serve her roused him from the deep affliction he had sunk into. He desired Orlando's instant presence in Melina's room, saying, De Torza and
the

the count were at that moment in high debate.

Orlando sprang up, swiftly following Jacobo through the chapel; yet though there seemed not a moment to lose, when they came to the vault, the mourner stopped beside the coffin of Felicia, bent over it, crossed himself, and sighed. They then hastened through the narrow winding passages, and emerged at the memorable pillar; arriving at the glass painting of St. Cecilia without discovery.

The count's voice was loud, as he was saying—"I will not abate one iota of my demand!"

De Torza answered—"And I will not grant one iota of it."

"What is your reason?" demanded the count.

"The conditions have not been fulfilled," De Torza answered.

"Give me back the strength I have wasted in the attempt," vociferated the count;

count; "restore my arm, and I will yet do the deed, if Adela may but be my recompence. What would I not do, what would I not suffer, to be possessed of that one woman!"

"To have her, you must *deserve* her," De Torza coolly observed.

"Do not I deserve her?" the count asked. "For whose sake am I now suffering? Was it not to gain her that I attempted murder?"

"Yes, but you met with a stripling boy, whom you had not courage to oppose," observed De Torza, with a contemptuous smile.

"I wish *you* may receive your deserts from the hand of that same *boy*," said the count; "we should then see, if his dauntless spirit did not surpass your own."

"His courage ought not to surpass, but it may probably equal mine," replied De Torza, "for *I* have reared him."

"This is wandering from the subject," said

said the count; "and now, don, for the last time, I bid you mark me. If you persist to withhold Adela from me, I will to the king, and inform him who it was that instigated me to attempt his life; I will expose your deep-laid plans, I will let Orlando know he is not De Torza's son—nay more, I will shew Ferdinand the agreement, which I have still in my possession, written by your *own hand*, where you promise me Adela, as a reward for the murder of your lawful sovereign!"

De Torza stood motionless for some minutes, while demoniac joy flushed the hitherto pale countenance of his companion.

After rallying his spirits, De Torza, with folded arms, haughtily approached the count, and made this laconic reply—"Those who *know* me will cease to threaten!"

"I will immediately put those threats
in

in execution," said the count; "to-morrow I begin my journey to Madrid."

"*To-day!*" vociferated De Torza; "let not another hour pass, ere you commence your boasted operations. Go," he continued, throwing open the door, "go and do your worst; yet remember, the moment you turn your back on my castle, *that moment Adela breathes her last!*"

The count had risen to depart, but the last of De Torza's speech arrested his steps; and, panic struck, he stood, not knowing how to act. Thus were these two daring spirits opposed to each other, and till the last words of De Torza, both were equally determined to persevere. A long silence ensued, which was broken by De Torza saying to his adversary—"Why do not you depart?" "Because," replied the count, "you have subdued a spirit never equalled but by your own: yes, don, I yield the palm to you; you have rendered me weak, powerless,

powerless, abject ! I will even *sue*, for what I before *demand*ed ! I at last know you, De Torza ; therefore I cease to threaten, and will supplicate. Yes, you now see Leolfo, who has bidden defiance to the *world*, crouch at your feet ! I grant me my boon, and I am henceforth your slave."

"I now perceive you know me," said De Torza, extending his hand ; "Adela is—*yours* !"

The count sprang on his feet in an ecstasy of joy, when De Torza added— "Some time hence, but not immediately, Adela shall be yours."

The count promised patience, and these two great opponents were as firm friends as they had been enemies. Leolfo anticipated his happiness, when a sudden twinge in his arm called him from his ideal bliss, and De Torza observed— "My dear count, we must have this arm cured before you will be fit for a bridegroom ; for believe me, in the
state

state you are now in, you are more fit for a tomb than a wife."

"I despair of it ever being restored," said Leólfo; "but how long am I to wait before I am to be blessed?"

"Twelve months, at least," replied De Torza, "unless my plans are completed sooner."

"Then Heaven grant they may be! for that time will seem to me twelve ages," said the count.

De Torza proposed Francisco should undertake the count's arm, instead of the surgeon who had attended it since the death of Felicia, and under whose management it had daily grown worse. The count gladly assented, and his future father-in-law left him to give orders accordingly.

Orlando quitted his hiding-place in a state of distraction; and Jacobo, after closing the panel, followed his young master into the little chapel. — "At least," said the latter, "we shall have time

time to prevent this evil, as your father seems to take so long before he gives your sister to that infamous count; therefore do not take on thus, I shall think my life well lost in such a cause."

Orlando pressed the faithful fellow's hand, desiring him not to divulge a word to any one of what they had just witnessed. He then intrusted him with the secret of his not being related to Adela, which Jacobo smiling, said, he had long suspected; for a brother could not have felt that restless anxiety his young master had lately betrayed.

It may seem strange, that Orlando did not inform Adela she was still destined for the count; but he wished (though he saw no foundation for such a hope) to be loved by her for himself alone, and to possess her guileless heart, uninfluenced by the fear of becoming the wife of him she had every reason to believe was the Brazen Mask.

When Adela left Orlando in the garden,

den, she hastened to her own apartment, and throwing herself into a chair, eased her oppressed heart by a flow of tears. Her pride had been wounded in the most vulnerable part; for she feared Orlando thought meanly of her understanding, by praising her for those perfections she was unconscious of possessing. Her natural dignity of mind bade her resent the insult; while tenderness for the offender pleaded strenuously for pardon. Anger said, banish his image from your heart—Love said, keep it there for ever—and Love became triumphant!

Adela was sitting by the window, with her head on her hand, her beautiful companion being perched close to its mistress on the lattice, which was covered by the geranium and jessamine, whose thick foliage hid her, as she pensively watched Orlando, who had just thrown himself on the bank she had arisen from. Resentment whispered—
if

if he loved, he could not stay there, but would follow, and try to make his peace; Love replied, he cannot yet leave that spot, because the object of his affections has rested on it—and Love again bore off the palm.

Adela watched, till she saw Orlando quickly arise, and follow Jacobo, when she as quickly arose, went into the garden, and once more seated herself on the bank, under the orange trees, where she remained two hours, half angry with herself for having been angry with Orlando. She had gathered one single blade of grass, which was more agreeable to her than all the aromatic herbs of Arabia. If Love was asked, why this blade of grass seemed to contain such intrinsic value, Love alone perhaps could tell.

At last, Annette roused her young mistress from her pensive reverie, by saying, Elvira waited dinner. Adela followed, found her mother seated at the table,

table, and Orlando pacing the room. Adela took her usual seat, placed the dove on the back of her chair, and Orlando took his. All were silent. Orlando did not taste a morsel, but sat chopping salt on his plate, while Adela's dinner remained untouched—and she was playing with the blade of grass.

“My children,” said Elvira, “you do not eat—Heaven forbid you should be ill!”

“I am not quite well to-day, mother,” Orlando answered; “the air is insupportably warm!”

“And is it the heat of the air which has robbed me of my sweet girl's conversation, and left that tear-drop on her cheek?” demanded Elvira.

The telltale tear remained in its place, while another trembled on the broad dark eyelash of Adela, who attempted to speak, remained silent, still twisting the blade of grass into various forms.

Elvira feared she knew not what, and hastily exclaimed—"My children, tell me what has happened!"

"For the first time in our lives, Adela and I have differed in opinion," said Orlando.

"Is that all?" demanded Elvira.

"*All*, do you call it," replied Orlando; "it is all that could make me miserable, for I have so far offended, as to see no hope of pardon."

Adela put the blade of grass into the beak of the dove, saying—"Go, present him with the branch of peace."

The little flutterer knew the signal given, when it was to pass from one person to another—and flying across the table, alighted on Orlando's shoulder. He took the grass out of its beak, put it in his bosom, made but one step round the table, clasped Adela in his arms, saying—"Forgive me."

Resentment said—push him away!—
Love interfered, with saying—let him
clasp

clasp thee to his heart still closer—and Love for the third time gained the victory!

Orlando kissed the tear-drop off her cheek, as Adela sealed his forgiveness with a smile so peculiar to herself; while the little busy god of love dried the crystal drop on her beautiful eyelash, which remained there as if loth to leave its home.

Elvira laughed at the fracas, and the trio was happy.

Orlando was in raptures, for he was sure Adela loved him.

The dinner was taken away untouched, for now they were too happy to eat; and they strolled into the garden, where Orlando renewed the subject he began in the morning, and so successfully pleaded, that Adela hid her face on his shoulder, as she blushed assent to his wishes.

“Consent to be wholly mine,” said

c 2

Orlando;

Orlando; "mine by the softest ties of Hymen!"

Adela placed both her hands in his, ingenuously saying—"Such as I am, take me; for I can love none but Orlando!"

His ecstasy cannot be described—none can guess it, but those who have been in similar circumstances. His behaviour was so extravagant, that Elvira, who had been seeking them, and just this moment appeared, was fearful the reason of Orlando was affected, as he violently seized her hand, exclaiming—"She is mine—mine for ever!"

Elvira asked what he meant?

"I mean, I am too happy to explain myself," said Orlando; "oh, mother, rejoice with me!"

"I will, my son, if you will tell me what I am to rejoice about," replied Elvira.

"About Adela, mother," Orlando answered.

"My

“My joy has always centred in her,” Elvira observed.

“Yes,” returned Orlando; “but she has consented to what you and I have so long wished—she will be mine by the holy ties of matrimony.”

“Now you speak plainly,” said Elvira. “Heaven has been kind in granting this one wish of my heart.”

“Will my mother give her consent?” asked Adela, blushing as she knelt beside Orlando.

“Will I!” exclaimed Elvira; “where shall I find a protector for my child but in Orlando? That you might be united, has been the constant wish of my heart, since the moment I heard he was not my son! thus, my children, let me join your hands. May Heaven smile propitiously on the deed, and grant your union may be happier far than mine, and pluck the thorns from every rose which strews your path! God of the persecuted, bless these my children!”

Her maternal tears fell on their hands, as she still held them in hers, when Orlando rising, threw an arm round each, leading them to a seat, where they spent the luscious moments as they flew, in imparting joy to each other. Elvira said she had now done with time, as her only earthly wish was gratified, and the little while she was to remain on earth should be spent in preparing her soul to meet its Creator.

Annette came to know her mistress's commands, as she was finishing the last sentence; and as this was a subject which Annette never had fortitude to think on, the faithful creature could not hide her inquietude, for the dissolution of her beloved mistress was what she could not bear to hear mentioned.

Elvira knew the subject always distressed this kind attendant; and to make her amends, told her she must soon be bridemaid to Adela. This news quickly raised the spirits of Annette, who, by
the

the wild effusions of her joy, betrayed she had something of the French girl left in her yet.

Hours, days, and weeks flew, wafted by the downy wing of Cupid, while he sometimes hid himself in the bosom of his fair proselyte, and at others would peep through the dark eye of Orlando, as he pressed Adela to his heart: now the little urchin would inhabit a ringlet which fell, twisted by the hand of Nature, over her polished forehead, and then spread himself over the fine manly figure of Orlando, as he rose to pluck the purple grapes, which hung in clusters above their heads. They lived to love, and loved to live, in the full fruition of each other's love.

Paulo approved, Annette was gay, Elvira happy, and Jacobo, who was become the deserved friend and confidant of his young master, shared his felicity; yet with a melancholy sigh he would draw comparison between their fates,

and wish this enviable happiness might last for ever.

As Adela was seated in her mother's apartment, intently gazing on a miniature of Orlando taken by herself, she perceived an unusual dust, and opening the monumental door to ascertain the cause, beheld Orlando and Jacobo sweeping the little chapel with the diligence of two galley slaves, whose freedom depended on their present exertions.—“What can you be doing this for?” she asked in amazement.

Jacobo smiled, Orlando remained silent, but swept still faster; and love answered her question, as she shut the door with a crimson blush.

It would have been obvious to any one but Adela, at the first glance, why Orlando was so sedulously cleaning the little chapel; but it sometimes happens, that those persons who should see clearest cannot see at all; and thus it was with Adela, or she would not have trou-

bled

bled master Cupid to answer the question.

When Orlando had finished his dusty job, and made himself fit to appear before his mistress, he took her hand, and led her into the chapel, secretly enjoying her trembling confusion; for as Love had been kind enough to inform her why such an alteration had been made in the cleanly appearance of this little temple of worship, he now whispered in her ear the subject of discourse Orlando would choose.—“See, my life,” said the youth, “what a difference a little exertion has made in Hymen’s temple, who need not now fear that the cobwebs will extinguish his torch, but waits thy sweet assent to light it afresh to-morrow morn.”

“To-morrow?” said the maid—“no, not so soon as that.”

“And why not, my Adela?” he demanded; “we have loved from infancy, though it is only six weeks since I de-

clared my passion : what occasion is there for delay ?”

“ We are happy now, Orlando,” she replied, “ what would you more ?”

“ True,” said he, “ we are happy, but still that happiness can be increased ; I would have a legal right to defend you.”

Adela tried to change the discourse, by admiring the crimson velvet cushions, whose colour could not before be seen, and only represented so many piles of dust, heaped together by the hand of time. But Orlando was not to be turned from his purpose, and seating her on one of them, renewed the subject nearest his heart ; yet the earliest day he could persuade her to fix was, that day fortnight.

Elvira would not influence her daughter in so important a point as marriage, though it was her earnest wish this alliance should take place ; and was sincerely rejoiced when Orlando informed her that wish was so near being realized.

The

The happy nuptial hour at last arrived, burnished with the golden beams of the rising god of day, as he exhaled the glittering drops of dew, which nightly moistened the thirsty ground of so hot a climate as Spain; and the little feathered songsters of the castle grounds did not spare their warbling throats, as they seemed to carol Hymen's marriage hymn.

Yet the gay commencement of this long-expected day suddenly changed at the beginning of the ceremony, which was performed by the good father Paulo, in the before-mentioned chapel, Elvira, Annette, and Jacobo, being the witnesses. As soon as the holy man had joined the hands of Orlando and Adela, a dark grey cloud overshadowed the building, a single clap of thunder shook it to its centre, while the livid lightning ran round the aisles. Paulo paused, Elvira sighed, Annette crossed herself, Jacobo bowed, Adela trembled, while Orlando

looked on her with that benevolence with which angels regard those they are destined to watch over. The momentary storm ceased, and the marriage was completed without further interruption.

Paulo bestowed his benediction on the new-married pair, with the same fervour as if they had been his own children; but Elvira bestowed hers with a melancholy foreboding, for the loud clap of thunder still sounded in her ears.

The remainder of this momentous day was spent by these six persons in the happy enjoyment of sincere friendship. Still the warning voice of the thunder seemed to have left the dark cloud remaining on the mind of Elvira; and when the young couple had strolled to the favourite orange trees in the garden, she asked Paulo if the sudden storm might not be looked upon as a presentiment of future evil?

“I know not, my daughter, whether it may, or may not, be viewed in that light,”

light," replied the good man : " we are not gifted with prescience, and a sudden peal of thunder is no uncommon thing in our climate, especially on such a sultry day as this. It is true, the Almighty sometimes speaks through the warning of the elements, but we have not capacities sufficiently clear to say, in such cases, to whom the message is sent. In my opinion, when the Creator of the thunder speaks in this way, it is to a nation, or people generally, and not to persons individually. With respect to the apprehensions you entertain, those sentiments are not always sufficiently strong to act upon, though they are strong enough to make weak minds uneasy. Recollect, there was no such warning on the day of your marriage—there was no voice to bid you beware of the too fascinating De Torza, save the feeble one of your old friend Paulo, and yet what a fatal marriage has that proved to you ! though the sky then represent-

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ed one azure curtain, drawn betwixt heaven and earth. Adela and Orlando seem formed for each other, and will, I trust, live to prove the fallacy of your fears."

The old man's reasoning in some measure eased the mind of Elvira, and the bride and bridegroom had forgotten the thunder, lightning, and every thing but each other : they lived in the full enjoyment of real happiness for nearly three months, when an event occurred which somewhat disturbed them. The great key was heard in the lock of the outward door, when De Torza entered, as Orlando sprang out of the window. Elvira and Adela were much confused, which De Torza attributed to his not having paid them a visit for so long a time.—"I come, madam," he said, addressing Elvira, "to inform you of my intention respecting your daughter. It is my will she shall marry ; you will do well to instruct her how to conduct herself, and not to thwart my purpose a second

cond time. I did not inform you of my plan, when I wished her to give her hand to the count some time back, because I did not wish you to prejudice her mind against him; and probably that was the rock on which my hopes were wrecked; but now I trust to meet with no disappointment. You will be emancipated from this part of the castle, will reign its entire mistress, the moment your daughter is married. But you are silent; what am I to infer from that?"

"Surprise has prevented me from speaking," replied Elvira, as she tried to conceal her agitation; "you must allow some time to prepare Adela for the event."

"She is already prepared," De Torza answered; "has she not heard what I said? will she refuse to purchase her mother's liberty?"

He fixed his eyes on Adela, as she stood

stood pale, and panting for breath, unable to speak a word.

"I have been so long used to this abode," Elvira said, "that I have no wish to change it, if my child's happiness is to be the price of purchasing another."

"Perhaps not," answered De Torza; "but you will change this residence either to be absolute mistress of the castle, and the envy of the public, as being the wife of the second man in Spain (for I acknowledge but one superior), or you will inhabit one of its deepest dungeons, and there drag out the remainder of your days, unpitied and unknown: which of the two, depends on the conduct of your daughter. She will now have it in her power to convince me she is possessed of that filial attachment of which you have so often boasted."

"And I have not boasted without foundation," said Elvira: "but who is it you wish to unite Adela to?"

"That

"That is immaterial," replied De Torza—"it is sufficient that I approve the man."

"Immaterial!" exclaimed Elvira; "is your daughter to marry a man she does not know, or probably when known, one whom she cannot esteem?"

"Pshaw!" said De Torza—"nonsense! What has esteem, and all such romantic sentiments, to do with matrimony? did not you marry me for love alone?"

"Verily and truly I did," Elvira answered.

"And have you been happy?" demanded her husband.

"Alas, no!" sighed Elvira.

"Your answer makes good my argument," said De Torza—"that love has no business to interfere with matrimony."

"But," resumed Elvira, "in our union, the love was all on my side. Had you, De Torza, but have had the slight-

est

est esteem for me, we should, I am certain, have been happy."

"I esteemed you as a wife ought to be," replied De Torza; "I liked you best in your proper place—namely, at a little distance. Wives are very good sort of things when properly managed; but, without restraint, they become as untractable as the roaring sea."

"I have not repined at your treatment of me," said Elvira, "though I have keenly felt its harshness."

"Well, well, that will soon be over, if you instruct our Adela to act up to her duty," interrupted De Torza, as he rose to take his leave.

"But you will allow some time," said Elvira—"a few months?"

"*Months!*" exclaimed De Torza.

"Weeks, I mean," answered Elvira.

"We will talk about that when I see you again," he replied. "Our conversation has been very long, Elvira; but how happens it that Adela has not yet spoken?"

spoken? Faith! and if she should remain dumb, what a blessing that will be to her husband!"

Adela tried to say something, but could not articulate a syllable; and as her colour went and came, her father smiled, saying, the roses and lilies were playing at bo-peep. He took his leave in a much better humour than he entered, notwithstanding which, as he locked the outward door, Elvira fancied she again heard the loud clap of thunder.

With the disappearance of De Torza fled the fortitude of Elvira; she foresaw all the horrors of his rage, when the truth should find way to his ear. How to conceal the marriage of her daughter, or how to prevent her being forced into a second, she was equally unable to contrive.

Adela, whose state of mind was not more enviable, had fled into the garden, and throwing her arms round her husband's

band's neck, sobbed out the fatal intelligence on his bosom. It was in vain he tried to assure her things could not be so bad as she apprehended; in vain with cheering confidence he told her she was safe, being already married—her despair seemed beyond all bounds.

“You mistake me, my loved Orlando,” she said; “you do not see the ground of my distraction. It is not a second marriage that I fear, because that cannot take place while you live; but it is the persecuting hate with which my father will pursue the object of my heart's fond love. Oh, Orlando, your life will hang on the point of his sword, and all my joys will wither, as the flowers of spring, which have too early budded!”

“Think not I will let thee remain here, to encounter those evils the weakness of thy nerves have conjured up,” replied Orlando, as he encircled her in his arms. “I have too long indulged in the dear enjoyment of thy matchless charms,

charms, and must now begin to act. I have a powerful friend at court, for Ferdinand is as a father to me,; and it is fortunate, that through the means of good Mezenza, I have not offended his majesty by neglect. He will, if I desire it, send me a troop, that will bury De Torza in the ruins of his own proud domain. Trust me, love, no ill shall reach thee, while shielded by my arm. Besides, have not I a friend in Regolio?"

"A friend in Regolio!" demanded Adela; "is he not the son of the count? or rather, the son of the Brazen Mask?"

Orlando mused for some minutes, and then went to console Elvira.

His proposal of sending to the king for force sufficient to commence hostilities against De Torza by no means quieted the uneasiness of Adela; for she too well knew that force would avail little against *him*, and trembled alike for the safety of her husband and mother.

mother. Her heart chilled within her, as she pictured to herself what such a man as De Torza might do, aided by such a one as the count.

The day was spent in forming resolutions and abandoning them. Many were the plans thought of, and rejected as impracticable. Orlando proposed to set off immediately to Madrid, and state their difficulties to the king; but this Adela would not consent to; and it was at last determined they should all leave the castle on the night following.

Orlando climbed the garden-wall by means of the rope-ladder, and went in search of Regolio, to request his assistance in lending him two mules, as it was impossible his wife and mother could perform the journey on foot.

Adela saw him scale the wall, which was of fearful height; with an intensity of feeling she could not surmount, which she feared foreboded no good. His absence seemed to oppress her heart more
than

than any circumstance she had encountered before, and rendered her incapable of assisting her mother and Annette in preparing a few necessaries for their departure.

In the evening Orlando returned, to the unexpected joy of his young wife, who made herself sure she never should see him again, and promised not to torment herself a second time, by giving way to the false fears of presentiment. He had succeeded in meeting with Regolio, who had accommodated him with a mule more than he requested, and Orlando had left them tied to some trees in the neighbouring forest, as he thought it might lead to a discovery if he brought them near the castle.

His next step was to find Jacobo, whom he had not seen for three days; and after waiting some hours in the vault, he placed a small stone on the foot of the broken coffin so often mentioned before,

before, which was a signal agreed upon between them.

Jacobo perceived the stone when he went to pay his midnight visit to the remains of Felicia, and immediately hastened to his young master. His surprise was great on hearing of the intended flight of Elvira and her family; he earnestly entreated to attend them; but Orlando thought he would be of more service by remaining in the castle. Some means might be devised to convey intelligence of the proceedings of De Torza, which would be of the greatest importance to the fugitives, and which knowledge could not be obtained if Jacobo accompanied them. Instead of retiring to rest, this faithful creature set off to Paulo, who was much engaged with his friend the abbot, whose health had for some time been in a declining state.

Paulo returned with Jacobo before sunrise, in the utmost consternation at the

the sudden alteration about to take place at the castle : he found his presence necessary to calm the agitated spirits of Elvira and her daughter, who dreaded to go, yet feared to stay.

“ Oh, father,” exclaimed the former, “ had I but listened to your parental advice above twenty years ago, with respect to my unfortunate marriage, I should not now have to weep over my persecuted child ! My blind, wilful obstinacy has entailed wretchedness on my blameless offspring ! Why, oh why do I not suffer alone ? ”

“ Daughter,” said the good priest, “ this is arraigning the dispensations of the Almighty ! It is his will that all should suffer affliction in some degree while in this probationary state ; and shall the afflicted say to *Him*, why hast thou laid so much upon me ? or the feeble, why hast thou not made me strong ? It is not for us to ask *wherefore* we suffer, but to ask for resig-

tion to endure his will with becoming humility ; and be assured, those who suffer patiently, He will reward, either here or hereafter. I have known great things to arise out of small ones ; and probably the very circumstances which you bewail, may lead to moments of happiness now unthought of."

" I plainly see my error," replied Elvira, " and will look forward with hope to the happy termination you seem to predict."

" As for you, my drooping flower," said Paulo, turning to Adela, " from whom I have rooted every noxious weed, now that you are going to lose my fostering care, which has been like that of an old gardener towards a tender favourite plant, may the God of your mother give you a double portion of strength to support what He sees fit for you to bear ! Be vigilant, be humble, be faithful, and I shall see you shine through your troubles, like Cynthia through

through the dark clouds, which sometimes surround her."

He exhorted Orlando to beware of giving way to the natural warmth of his temper; and cheered Annette with an assurance of an eternal recompence for her faithful attachment to her religion and her mistress.—“ May this journey,” said he, “ terminate more happily than that in which I accompanied you and your mistress in our younger days, when we were taken by banditti, and confined for so long a period in the robbers’ cave ! But even in that unexpected event, I see the finger of Providence; for there we found the wretched lost Leora, whose dark mind I am proud to say we were the humble instruments of enlightening.”

He spent some time in prayer, then rising and extending his hands towards Adela (who was still kneeling by his side), at the same time raising his eyes to heaven, he added—“ God of my fa-

D. 2

thers,

thers, protect this my youngest born—
shield from every blast of adversity this
gentle lamb of my flock!”

He presented to her, as a memorial of
his affection, and as his last gift, an
ebony cross, which she pressed to her
lips in silence, then clasping his knees,
gave vent to her feelings in tears, as she
sobbing said—“You have been the only
father whose fostering care I have ever
known; and it is hard, very hard to
part.”

He raised and strained her to his heart,
as the big tear traced the furrows of his
face; but dashing it aside, he assumed a
more cheerful countenance, and hastened
their departure.—“Come,” he said, “this
tarrying may prove dangerous. I must
be so unpolite as to entreat your ab-
sence; the inmates of the castle will
soon be stirring, and all possibility of
escape may be prevented: you must,
and shall leave me.”

He gave Adela to Orlando, then drew
the

the arm of Elvira under his own, and, followed by Annette and Jacobo, who carried a few parcels of necessities for their journey, walked in silence down the little garden.

Orlando, throwing the rope-ladder up to the top of the wall, which fastened on it by grapnels, ascended first; then fixing another, which Regolio had given him, to hang down on the other side, beckoned Adela to mount.

She took a mournful look at the beautiful parterre, where she had gambolled away her happiest days, and had placed her foot on the first step, when her beloved little dove, which had hid itself in the foliage of a tree above her, came fluttering into her bosom. This was another trial, for not knowing where she should be cast, she feared to take it with her, yet could not bear to leave it behind.

Paulo took it from her, saying —

D 3 “This

"This shall be my darling, till happier times restore its mistress to me again."

Adela kissed her favourite, reluctantly parted with it, then, with the assistance of Jacobo, reached the top of the wall, and with the help of her husband descended on the other side. This was the first time in her life she had breathed out of the grounds of the castle. Elvira, with Annette, followed in safety. Jacobo desired he might attend them to the wood, where the mules were left, which was agreed to. Paulo did not follow them, being too infirm to scale so high a wall, and let himself out by the way of the vault.

The fugitives, now they were out of the grounds of the castle, felt as if a weight was taken off their minds, and with elastic steps bent their way to the forest. The mules were quietly grazing where they were left; and when the party was mounted, Orlando grasped

Jacobo's

Jacobo's hand, thanking him for his attention.

"I have not forgotten my promise to the lady Adela," said Jacobo, "which I swore over the remains of my lost Felicia, and wish you would consent for me to accompany you. Travelling the road you intend is at all times dangerous, and should you be attacked by banditti, how can your single arm protect the ladies?"

Orlando said he feared no banditti save those he had left in the castle, and thought if Jacobo did not return, his absence might lead to an earlier discovery of their flight. If any thing of consequence occurred at the castle, he desired him to make the best of his way to Madrid, and communicate his intelligence to doctor Fernandez; for Orlando could not say when he should arrive at the Escorial, as it was his intention to take a circuitous route, and stop at the

cottage of Mezenza, in order to rest his fellow-travellers.

Having thus arranged matters, the master and man bade adieu, the fugitives moving slowly on, while Jacobo, with his arms folded, stood to see the last of this unfortunate family.

When they were nearly out of sight, Adela waved her handkerchief, as a last farewell, which frightened the beast she rode on, which set off full speed, with unaccountable obstinacy, till overtaken by Jacobo, who, with the swiftness of Mercury, darted after and stopped it.

"This is a bad beginning," said Jacobo.

"True," replied Orlando, "but if you had had resolution to depart, my Adela would not have been tempted to frighten the mule with her handkerchief. I know not how it is, but something whispers me that you must return to the castle."

They

They once more took leave, and the travellers quickly trotted out of sight.

Every thing was new to Adela, who almost forgot her perilous situation, while she with eager curiosity contemplated every object as it met her ardent gaze.

Orlando judged it safer to travel near the skirts of the forest, than to strike into its deep gloom, where they were more likely to meet with bravoës; and he thought if his enemies at the castle pursued them, they would most probably suppose the fugitives had sheltered themselves in the middle of the wood, than seek them in the more open parts.

They travelled without interruption till the sun was risen high in the firmament, whose scorching rays obliged them to secrete themselves under the thick foliage of some underwood, a little deeper in the forest. Being faint, they gladly partook of some refreshments they carried with them. After much persuasion,

Elvira and Adela tried to compose themselves to sleep, Orlando during the time keeping watch.

It was not long ere the latter, pillowed by the supporting arms of her husband, and fanned by the downy pinion of Somnus, sunk into a quiet slumber; and Orlando, as he contemplated her inimitable form and features, hoped the expected little stranger who would some months hence claim him for its father might resemble only its mother.

Orlando had tied the mules to trees at some distance, in case the beasts should be observed, hoping that himself and those he held dear might escape discovery. The mules having length of tether sufficient, had grazed till they had satisfied their hunger, and like their riders, had lain themselves down to rest. Annette, who was on the alert, as she supported the head of her mistress, started, and laying her finger on her lip, pointed the attention of Orlando to two men,

men, whom she saw at a little distance through the underwood which concealed her own party.

The men were of ferocious appearance, being well armed, and were coming in a direction towards our fugitives. The sound of their voices soon reached Annette and Orlando, who were all ear to catch the intention of these unwelcome intruders.

One of the men threw himself on the ground so near our unfortunate travellers, that they dared neither stir nor speak. "I tell you," said he, "addressing the other, "I tell you, master Zanardi, I shall go no farther, unless I may mount one of those mules we see yonder. Why the deuce are not we to make free with them?"

"And I tell you, master Braganze, that you shall not mount one of those said mules; nor if you do, I will report you to the captain," replied Zanardi.

"Put that threat in execution," said

the first speaker, "and I will make a report amongst your brains, you pitiful, mean-spirited——"

"None of your elegant language," exclaimed Zanardi; "if that skull of thine was not thicker than all the trees of the forest put together, you would perceive my motive."

"I have perception enough to know, that whatever property chance throws in my way I have a right to," answered Braganze; "and by his holiness's great toe, I will have one of those mules!"

"And by his holiness's whole body at once, I swear thou shalt not have one of those mules!" said Zanardi.

Braganze laid his hand on the hilt of his dagger.

"Peace, fool!" continued Zanardi; "know you not when the cat is on the watch that the mice are near? Think you those mules you have such a hankering after tied themselves to the trees? I tell you I scent the prey.

Will

Will not those who tied them there fetch 'em away? Will it not be better to seize the riders as well as thy favourite mules at the same time?"

"You are right," replied Braganze; "and I shall have one of them after all."

He held out his hand as a token of reconciliation, and his companion stretched himself beside him.

Elvira awoke, when Annette made signs to her that danger was nigh.

Adela still slept, and the anxiety of her friends is impossible to describe. They trembled lest she should awake and speak, before she could be made to understand their perilous situation. Their troublesome neighbours seemed in no hurry to depart, and after some time the conversation was resumed by Braganze saying—"Pray how long are we to stay here?"

"Till something happens to occasion us to depart," answered Zanardi.

"A greater dolt than I am could have found

found out that," said Braganze; "this answer is just like what you always give!"

"Such answers are best for people of your turn," said Zanardi.

Braganze, half-raising himself, exclaimed—"By the bright eyes of St. Ursula, thou art the most aggravating, insolent——"

"The most pleasing, agreeable, fascinating fellow, that ever fired off a pistol," interrupted Zanardi—"I know I am; but prithee, do not give vent to any more volleys of your favourite expressions, which blaze for a moment, and evaporate in smoke. It is not in my power to tell you how long we are to wait here, but I could inform you for what purpose we came here, if you had asked that question."

"Well, then, for what purpose did we come?" asked Braganze.

"To steal a lady," the other replied.

"To steal a lady?" echoed Braganze.

"By

"By the bright shining blade of my favourite dagger, but that will be rare sport! Whoever is the clever thief will have a right to her, of course, for himself! But come, good Zanardi, tell me where she is to be found. Rise, man, and shew me the way, for my spirits are all in an uproar to get at her!"

"Be patient, and she will have the politeness to wait upon you herself," said Zanardi. "She will pass through this forest, accompanied by her mother, husband, and servant; our company is scattered in small parties, and that which perceives the prey first, is to give our usual signal; for the husband, though young, is a valiant fellow, and can only be overcome by numbers."

"She turns out to be married then," exclaimed Braganze; "umph! she won't please me on that account—therefore you may have her yourself."

"Do not be in such a hurry to dispose of her," said Zanardi; "she is not
B- destined

destined for either of us. The man who wants her is on the spot himself, and is one of our old employers—a particular favourite of yours, old count Leolfo.”

“Leolfo, say you?” asked Braganze.

A shrill whistle interrupted this question, when Zanardi, springing up, said—“There is our signal—the wolves have scented the sheep.”

Adela, starting at the whistle, awoke; and Orlando prevented her speaking, by sealing her lips with a kiss. The robbers had disappeared, and left our fugitives at liberty to speak. They had, no doubt, heard themselves described by Zanardi, and escape seemed impossible. Who had betrayed them into the hands of Leolfo? No one knew of their flight but Paulo, besides Jacobo; and it was impossible to suspect either of them. How then had their enemies gained their information? None present could answer the question—and the next was, what course were they to pursue? All

parts

parts of the forest were alike dangerous, and how were they to get out of it? Orlando now blamed himself for not permitting Jacobo to attend them. To remain in their present hiding-place was unsafe, as the robbers would most probably return to take the mules; yet to leave that concealment was equally hazardous, for they knew not which way to turn their steps. At all events, inaction could render them no service; and as soon as the alarm of Adela was a little abated, they left their hiding-place, and mounted the mules. Elvira proposed they should travel in a contrary direction to that which the robbers had taken, and they accordingly turned to the left.

"It cannot be," said Annette, "that the marauders who just left the same spot we have, are gone in search of us; for here we are left to ourselves."

"That thought did not strike me before," replied Elvira; "yet there seems
some

some probability in it, for if we had been discovered, would not Zanardi and his companion have given the signal to their comrades, to fly to the spot where we were?"

"Who then is the unfortunate party," asked Orlando, "if we are not? Did not those hired murderers describe us in every particular? Their destined prey consisted of four persons—such is our number: they are three females, and one man—such are we: they consist of a mother, servant, husband, and beautiful young wife—such as is my Adela: their enemy is the detested Leolfo—and such is ours! I would not damp your newly-risen hopes, did I see any thing to rest them on; and I am fearful of raising them too high, lest they should prove false, and then our misfortunes would seem to fall with greater weight, should we be attacked and overcome?"

The ladies could but mournfully reply that the reasoning of Orlando had but too
much

much truth in it ; yet Annette, who was loth to give up her favourite hope, asked, if Braganze and Zanardi had discovered them, allowing they were the persons they were in search of, why had the bravoës left the place where they were ?”

“ I do not say they had discovered us,” answered Orlando ; “ I only affirm, they described us—and probably some unexpected business called them away.

The fugitives travelled with palpitating hearts, expecting every moment to be seized, not daring to stand still, yet fearing to go forward. The mazes of the wood perplexed them, and they were uncertain to what part they were steering their course, when their ears were assailed by the clashing of swords, which sound came more near to them ; and in another moment they saw a Spanish gentleman fighting with three robbers at once. He dealt deadly blows around him ; a few paces behind was a lady, held by a fourth villain. At the
moment

moment the gentleman seemed overpowered, the lady, making a desperate effort, sprang from her detainer, and snatching up a pistol which lay on the ground, fired it in the face of one of the assassins, who fell at her feet. She took a blunderbuss from the belt of the expiring man, and pointed at the one she had broke from, who was endeavouring to regain his hold of her ; but seeing the gentleman still hard pressed by the remaining two braves, she turned her blunderbuss, and shot one of them through the heart. The gentleman, almost fainting through loss of blood, had just strength enough to plunge his sword into the breast of the third monster, when the fourth again seized the lady.

Orlando had by this time got round to her assistance, and struck his dagger into the side of this fourth villain, who let go his hold, turned his head, and Orlando beheld—Leolfo ! The latter staggered a few paces, and leaned his back
against

against a tree. Neither of them spoke, for the meeting was equally disagreeable to both.

Leolfo was drawing his sword, and Orlando was preparing to receive him, when the lady rushed between them, and fell into a violent hysteric laughing fit. Orlando stooped to raise her, placed her a few paces backward, turned to attack his enemy, but Leolfo was gone. He had availed himself of the moment that Orlando's attention was engaged by the lady, and like a dastardly coward, had sneaked off. Orlando's vexation at missing his inveterate foe may faintly be guessed.

Elvira, Adela, and Annette, who had been mute spectators of this horrid scene, now came forward to the assistance of the lady, while Orlando turned his attention to the gentleman. He examined his wounds, and thought if the bleeding could be stopped, none of them would be dangerous.

Annette,

Annette, who was never at a loss, took off the handkerchiefs which were round the necks of the three slain assassins, and with them bound up the wounds of the stranger. She found in the pockets of one of them a flask, containing a delightful wine, from the muskadel grape, which tended greatly to raise the sufferer. As soon as he could speak, he said to Orlando—"I know not who you are, to whom I am thus indebted; but strange as it may appear, I cannot thank you for your kindness, unless my Isis lives: life without her would be far worse than death!"

The lady was supported by Elvira and Adela; but on hearing the gentleman speak, she threw herself on his shoulder, exclaiming—"It is the voice of my Gustavus—the Virgin has preserved him!"

She now wept as violently as she before had laughed. Gustavus held her on his left arm, his right being wounded, silently

silently waiting for her agitation to cease. At last, tenderly embracing her, he said—“Thy Gustavus clasps his loved Isis; let not these feelings rob me of my only treasure, for thy tender frame will sink beneath this agitation, and thou wilt deprive me of thy precious life, which these slain assassins could not tear from me.”

The relief generally obtained from shedding tears, produced something like composure, when Gustavus turned to Orlando, saying—“Now I can thank you with my whole soul, for my Isis lives!”

Isis starting, said—“Where, oh where is my mother!”

“Where, indeed!” sighed Gustavus.

“Have you lost any of your party?” Orlando asked.

“We have,” replied Gustavus; “the mother of my wife and her attendant are missing.”

“I see some females through yonder trees,”

trees," said Annette, pointing to the spot.

Orlando went to the place, and returned with an elderly lady and a female servant.

Isis sprang into the arms of her mother, and soon as moderation was restored, presented Orlando as her preserver.—“I would, young lady,” said he, “your feelings had been stifled for one moment longer, that I might have finished my work on the wretch who held you.”

“Who could he be?” her mother demanded.

“The hated Leolfo,” answered Isis.

“You know him then?” Orlando asked.

“Too well, too well,” said Gustavus: “little did I think he was in these parts, or I should not have travelled a step, without being strongly guarded.”

“Pray,” asked Orlando, “how many does your party consist of?”

“You

“ You see them all,” replied Gustavus ;
“ three females and myself.”

“ Singular coincidence,” said Orlando ;
“ you likewise see the whole of my party,
three females and myself ! And what
renders it still more singular is, that I
and my friends stand in the same rela-
tionship to each other, as you and your
friends.”

“ Excuse me,” said Annette, “ if I
still retain my opinion, that we were not
the persons described by the two rob-
bers who seated themselves so near us.”

“ I am of the same opinion,” Elvira
observed.

“ And now it is too late, so am I,”
said Orlando.

“ Think it not too late, my love,”
said Adela, “ since adhering to your
own idea brought you here, time enough
to assist these strangers.”

“ Sweet angel,” exclaimed Gustavus ;
“ how shall we thank thee for such con-
siderate kindness ! My Isis will be greedy

of such delicate friendship, as thine must ever be."

A similarity of circumstances aided to cement these two families, introduced to each other under such oppressive persecution. The enemy of each was Leolfo. Not a doubt remained but it was the family of Gustavus which was described by Zanardi, and not that of Orlando; but as the robber said, the party destined for their prey consisted of a young married lady, her mother, servant, and husband, no wonder Orlando supposed it was his own family that was marked for destruction. He proposed to move from the spot, as soon as the strangers felt themselves able; for it was not unlikely that Leolfo would return with a party of his myrmidons, and accomplish his purpose, whatever it might be. The thought acted like electricity upon all present; and as Gustavus was but slightly wounded, they immediately set forward. As they journeyed on, the ladies

ladies cultivated the acquaintance of each other, and Gustavus related the following history to Orlando.

“In the province of Grenada, an alguazil resided of unshaken worth and honour, possessed of an amiable wife and blooming daughter, whom he looked upon as real treasures. In the course of his magisterial functions, some part of a gang of robbers, who had long infested the mountains of Grenada, was brought before Vedova, the alguazil; and though he was a man accustomed to lean more to the side of mercy than justice, yet he was determined to rid the country of these scourges to their fellow-men, ordering them to be sent well guarded to prison, to take their trial.

“When this determination was known, a person waited on Vedova, to persuade him from his purpose. The person was of mysterious appearance, wore a large Spanish hat, with a fine plume of black feathers, which partly shaded his features,

tures, and was enveloped in a long black cloak. He used many arguments to turn Vedova from his purpose, adding that some of the accused party, he was sorry to say, were distantly related to him. The alguazil remained inflexible. At last, this intercessor tried that irresistible plea, which has perverted thousands—placing in the hand of Vedova a heavy purse of gold. This the magistrate rejected with disdain, and desired the stranger to quit his house immediately. The man still argued, and Vedova feeling his honour had been called in question, by the offer of a bribe, words ran high between them, when the door opened, and a lovely girl ran in, saying—“Who is it has angered my father thus? Oh, my beloved parent, let your Isis sooth your ruffled spirits!”

“Vedova pressed his child to his bosom, and was calm in a moment. The stranger eyed her askance, appearing immovably fixed to the spot.

“Vedova

“Vedova desired him to take back his proffered bribe, and withdraw.

“The mysterious stranger bowed to Isis, then silently quitted the house, but left the purse of gold behind.

“The alguazil desired his daughter to take care of the money and purse, in order to restore it to the owner, should he ever call again. Isis took up the fatal purse, and put it into a drawer.

“Vedova adhered to his determination, and in the evening sent the prisoners, heavily laden with chains, being strongly guarded, to the nearest depot for criminals. They had not proceeded far from the alguazil's house, when they met a large party of desperadoes, headed by a person of commanding figure, whose face was concealed by a brazen mask. He ordered the guards to deliver up their prisoners. This was refused, and they stood on the defensive. The brigands attacked them with fury, killed

more than thirty of them, and several

several of the guards, and rescued the prisoners.

“On the following morning, two inquisitors entered the house of Vedova, bound him, searched his premises, packing up all papers ; and asked for a certain purse of gold they were informed was in his possession.

“The alguazil said, a stranger had left such an one there as they described the day before ; and Isis, in the innocence of her heart, gave the purse to the officers of the Inquisition, who immediately prepared to conduct the unfortunate man to that abode of misery.

“The agonizing shrieks of Isis and her mother, on finding Vedova was to be conveyed to the Inquisition, had no effect on these two men, who were so accustomed to witness the sufferings of others, that they looked on them as natural incidents.

“I was passing,” said Gustavus, “the house of the unfortunate alguazil at this

this moment, and hearing the cry of distress, I alighted off my mule, and entered without ceremony. The frantic agonies of Isis and her mother were almost too much for me to witness. I entreated vainly with the two officers for mercy, but I might as well have pleaded to the sand of the ocean. All I could obtain was, permission to follow them. This, in a small degree, pacified the ladies, who blessed me as the preserver of their father and husband.

“The eye of Vedova alone was dry—he alone was calm, and pressing his wife and child to his heart, as he prophetically said for the last time, gave them to my care, saying they were the only treasures the Inquisition would suffer him to bequeath me. The parting between these affectionate relatives was agony refined.

“I followed the worthy magistrate, but was not suffered to have any private conversation with him, and we talked
E 4 aloud.

aloud. His innocence supported him, though he had nothing to hope for, and every thing to fear. His only uneasiness was on account of his wife and child : he added, he had a God to leave them to, who had sent a protecting angel in the form of don Gustavus to shield them from evil.

“ I told him my fortune was large—that they should be to me as my mother and sister, for they should never want. His mind seemed much relieved, and pressing my hand fervently, he said he had nothing further to wish for.

“ On our arrival at Madrid, at the gate of the Inquisition we parted, when I hastened to the house of a person I was acquainted with, who was concerned in this iniquitous tribunal, who admitted me within its walls, and concealed me in a closet in the justice-hall, where I could see and hear what passed, by means of a chink in the wainscot; for if I had been

been discovered, my instant death would have been the consequence.

“Early on the following morning Vedova was led in. He still retained his composure, and looked on the instruments of death with placidity. One of the inquisitors read over his accusation, which nearly ran as follows:—You, Cornelius Vedova, are accused, and will shortly be convicted, of having disgraced your office of alguazil, by accepting a bribe, of one count Leolfo, to let certain prisoners escape; and that same bribe was contained in a purse marked with the name of Leolfo, which was interwoven in it; and was found on your premises by the officers of the Holy Inquisition.

“Here the grand inquisitor rose up, saying—‘Let the bribe be produced.’

“The purse, with its contents, was accordingly laid on the table, and the same judge said—‘Order the witness to come in.’

“ One of the familiars opened the door, and let in a person, dressed the same as he who offered the bribe to Vedova. The poor man started, and addressing his judge, said—‘ You cannot mean this man to be a witness against me, for he it was who vainly tried to corrupt my integrity, by offering me that purse of gold, which I resolutely refused, and which he basely left on the floor of my apartment: the word of such a man ought not to be taken!’

‘ Silence!’ vociferated the judge; then turning to Leolfo, said — ‘ Know you ought of this purse?’

‘ I do,’ replied the witness; ‘ it was mine, and I can swear to it; and will likewise swear, that on account of knowing Vedova to be venal, I determined to prove him such; and gave it to the prisoner, to bribe him to let some marauders go free, who were in his power. He accepted the bribe, and let his prisoners escape.’

‘ ’Tis

‘Tis false!’ exclaimed Vedova—‘I refused it; but to answer your own black intentions, you left it in my house; and the prisoners were taken from me by a strong force of brigands, headed by yourself, in a brazen mask.’

“Leolfo did not reply, but looked at the grand inquisitor with a smile, who thus addressed the prisoner.—‘Your guilt is proved, Vedova. In the first place, you acknowledge having the bribe in your possession; and in the second place, your prisoners are nowhere to be found. Your condemnation is—death! You are to be taken from here, and instantly broken on the wheel! Whatever your property consists of, it will be confiscated for the benefit of this holy institution.’

“The prisoner bowed, and crossing himself, said, with his eyes raised to heaven—‘Thou, God, seest me! thou knowest I am innocent!’

“Lead him to execution,” exclaimed the judge.

“Two familiars took each an arm of the unfortunate man, who turned to Leolfo, saying—‘God will judge thee, thou perjured monster!’

‘Bégone!’ said the judge.

“The familiars hurried their innocent prisoner out of the hall, and I saw him for the last time.”

Here the feelings of Gustavus overpowered him, and dashing the big tear aside, he remained for some time silent. After having given way to his grief, he informed Orlando that his friend entered the closet by a door in the back of it, and found Gustavus in a state of insensibility; and fearing a discovery, he conveyed him out immediately to his own house. It was long before Gustavus could be restored to rationality, and then he could not believe the execution had taken place. He flew on the wings of distracted friendship to the infernal prison,

son, and made inquiry at the gate, but was answered in the affirmative. Still he was unwilling to believe the worst, and filled the hand of the turnkey with gold doubloons, who shewed him the mangled, dead body of Vedova.

Thus perished a man, innocent of the crime imputed to him—a man possessed of integrity, honour, and every virtue that could adorn humanity. Without being permitted to prove his innocence, by bringing forward those who guarded the prisoners, and who escaped the attack of the Brazen Mask—without the aid of counsel, to plead his cause—without gaining the belief of any thing he asserted in his own defence—without time to prepare his soul for the awful change, he was dragged to execution like an ox, to be felled by his butchers! while on the other hand, all that his enemy chose to assert against him, was attended to as though it had been the truths of the Gospel!

Happy,

Happy, happy isle of England! well may you boast of your trial by jury! well may your inhabitants glory in the accused having the same protection as the accuser! well may they exult in their trials in the face of open day, before the eyes of the public! Volumes might be written in praise of this inestimable blessing!

Gustavus returned from the Inquisition horror-struck at what he witnessed; and in a state bordering on insanity, he asked himself if these inquisitors were men or devils! he was inclined to give them the latter appellation.

Twelve hours elapsed before Gustavus could bring himself to be the bearer of such dreadful tidings to the widow and orphan of Vedova. When he arrived at the once happy mansion of the alguazil, he found Leolfo had been there before him; and the officers of the Inquisition had placed their seal on all the effects of the fallen man.

Still

Still donna Vedova and her child knew not of their loss, for the errand of Leolfo was of a different nature. He was not blind to the soft beauties of Isis, the first time he beheld her, and finding her father inflexible in virtue, he despaired of possessing her in any way, while such a protector lived; therefore he had a double motive for removing Vedova out of his path. It was not likely Isis and her mother could ever be informed of any transactions within the Inquisition, and of course the treachery of Leolfo could not be suspected. His errand was, to feast his eyes once more with the delicate charms of Isis, before he fixed his determination. Her father, once removed, he saw no obstacle to his wishes, and putting on the mask of friendship, he offered his protection to those he had plunged in the bitterest wo. He appeared to take a friendly leave, promising to see them on the morrow.

As donna Vedova knew not of the

part

part Leolfo had acted, she did not inquire of him intelligence of her husband; but the moment Gustavus entered, she read the fatal news in his sunken eye and altered countenance.—“My husband!” she exclaimed.

“My father!” shrieked Isis—

“Is no more!” replied her mother, with a groan.

Gustavus remained silent; he was unwilling to confirm their fears, yet could not dispel them; and suffered the violence of their grief to flow uninterrupted. He then took a hand of each, and swore to supply their loss as far as in him lay. He kept the manner of Vedova’s death a secret, telling them their respected relative died of grief; and they do not to this day know the contrary.

Finding Leolfo had been there, and perceiving his intentions, Gustavus hastened the ladies away that night, and safely lodged them in a convent some miles off; the abbess of it was his aunt.

Bereft

Bereft of husband and father, turned from their peaceful home, without the means of support, it is not to be wondered at, that the destitute widow and orphan looked upon Gustavus as their guardian angel.

Isis wept for her father, and watched over her mother, with that unceasing affection, which rendered her still more lovely in the eyes of Gustavus. After twelve months residence in the convent, the violence of their grief had settled into a mild resignation, when the widow said to him—"How can it ever be in my power to recompence you for your goodness?"

"You have it fully in your power now," replied Gustavus.

"Impossible!" said donna Vedova. "Pennyless as I was left, what have I to bestow, which would be an equivalent for generosity like yours?"

"Give me your Isis," answered Gustavus.

He

He then asked permission to offer his hand and fortune to her, whom he had admired from the first moment he saw her. The widowed mother wept tears of real joy at this unexpected event ; for so delicate had been the conduct of Gustavus, she had no idea he loved her child beyond what compassion dictated. He was not slow in making use of the permission granted him, when the blushes of Isis told a tale she had long struggled to conceal.

No asylum could be so safe as the one Gustavus had chosen for his two friends, who had not a wish to leave it under their present circumstances ; for the amiable abbess seemed to be the copy from which Gustavus had shaped his conduct.

Though Isis knew not the extent of Leolfo's villany, she always trembled at his name, and looked upon him as the original cause of her father's death, in vainly attempting to make him swerve
from.

from that path of rectitude he had always trod, by offering him the fatal purse of gold; and she naturally supposed no one but Leolfo could have informed against Vedova.

In six months more Gustavus received the hand of Isis, who, though a poor, destitute, friendless orphan, seemed to him a greater treasure than if she had been heiress to the mines of Golconda.

Donna Vedova resided constantly with her son and daughter, and in order to render their felicity more complete, Gustavus quitted Grenada, and purchased an estate near Toledo, hoping to avoid the dreadful Leolfo, who, unknown to them, had an estate within two miles of the one he had bought; and thus, by endeavouring to avoid him, this unfortunate family came into the very mouth of their enemy.

The shade of the forest pleased Isis, who had often, in company with her husband, strolled some way into it in
the

the cool of evening, as their residence was not more than a mile from it; and Gustavus, whose only pleasure was to increase that of Isis, proposed to have a day's ramble through the forest, accompanied by her mother, and attended by a female servant. It was this little excursion which brought this amiable family and the fugitives from the castle of De Torza acquainted, and threw them all into the hands of their common enemy, Leolfo.

Gustavus was lamenting the bitter fate of Vedova, when a blow felled him senseless to the earth; and the arms of Orlando were pinioned behind him.

A triumphant smile rendered the cadaverous features of Leolfo still more satanic as he held Orlando, exclaiming —“Glorious moment! I have taken all my birds at once! they have wisely fallen into my net! Ha, ha, ha!”

A party of brigands started up from the underwood which concealed them,
and

and formed a circle round the travellers, which rendered escape impossible.

The shrieks of the ladies would have softened any hearts except those whose hands they had fallen into.

A pause ensued, and one of the bravoes said—"Why, how is this?—do I see double? Were we not engaged to attack a party consisting of four persons—a gentleman, his young wife, an old lady, and her servant?"

"Right," answered another, "we were so instructed."

"Behold," resumed the first speaker, "this party consists of eight persons—two gentlemen, two young wives, two old women, and two pretty chambermaids! Now, burn my whiskers, if I have any thing to do with these travellers! for these eight persons cannot be the four we were hired to detain; so, comrades, draw off, and let 'em pass. Shall it not be so, my lads?"

"Let

“Let ’em pass ! let ’em pass !” was repeated by several voices at once.

“At your peril !” exclaimed Leolfo. “Villains, do your duty !—seize them all !”

“Whew !” said Molino, who headed the bravoës—“you do well to threaten ! You engaged us to seize four persons, and, by the barrel of this little pistol, we will not detain eight !”

Leolfo stamped and swore ; but the resolution of Molino was not to be shaken ; and the count at last said—

“Well, then, since it must be so, that only four are to be taken, let the two old women and their servants escape ; the two young ladies, and the two gentlemen, are, of course, my prisoners.”

“Not yet, my lord count,” replied Molino, sarcastically ; “the prey is not quite taken. I will not detain two gentlemen, because I was only ordered to stop one, and I will not detain young women for the same reason. Why, thou

art

art worse than Beelzebub ! What the deuce do you want with two beautiful girls at a time ?”

“Curses catch thee !” said Leolfo.

“The same to you, friend !” replied Molino.

Braganze, who owed Leolfo a grudge, said—“You seem to have forgotten, Molino, that our captain ordered us to let a party of four pass unmolested. It strikes me, that some of these persons must be the four alluded to ; and I therefore agree with the count in letting the old ladies and their maids, who are almost as ancient as their mistresses, go free. You can then use your pleasure in liberating one of the gentlemen, and one of those pretty angels the count seems to have fixed his ogling eyes upon !”

“Dastard !” exclaimed the count.

“Bravo !” shouted Molino. “Braganze, I give thee credit for this, and will follow thy advice.”

“At

"At your peril let those go who I command you to detain!" said Leolfo.

"Hold, sir count!" Molino answered; "I will let you know that I am commanding officer here; therefore, travellers, pass!"

"What, all?" demanded Leolfo.

"You have yourself liberated the elder ladies, with their servants; and I will follow your example of generosity," answered Molino, "by setting free two more prisoners—one of the gentlemen, and a lady; so choose which of the two couple you like best."

"Will gold turn thee from thy purpose?" asked Leolfo.

"Not if it comes through your hands," Molino replied; "so be quick, and decide."

The pale lip of Leolfo quivered with rage, as he placed his hand on the shoulder of Orlando, and pointing to Adela, said—"This gentleman and that lady remain with us!"

The bravoes drew off right and left as Molino said—"Pass, travellers."

Adela, on hearing the last words of Leolfo, gave an agonizing shriek. Orlando vainly attempted to say something; and the six liberated persons knelt at the feet of the count, imploring mercy for their two friends. Elvira and Annette wrung their hands in deep despair; while Gustavus, who had recovered from the blow, and being the only one who could speak intelligibly, thus addressed Leolfo—"I have somewhere seen an observation, count, which says—'There is no person so good, but he has in him some evil; and no one so base, but he has in him some good!' Prove the latter part of this assertion—do one act of noble generosity, and set your prisoners free. Believe me, Leolfo, such a deed as that would, in some degree, wash away the innocent blood of Vedova, which still stains your dark soul! Nay, start not, for I was a wit-

ness to the manner of his death; wherein I may say you was judge, accuser, and executioner; and though Omnipotence has not yet demanded the blood of the innocent alguazil at your hands, depend upon it, that He who formed the ear, heard your false accusations; and He who gave vision to the eye, saw the blackness of your crimes, at that and every moment of your life! Repent—be merciful; spare that lovely young creature, and the brave Orlando, and Heaven will smile on the action!”

He ceased speaking; but Leolfo, scorning to reply, or finding his arguments unanswerable, motioned him to depart, as he proceeded to place Adela on a beautiful Arabian, which he mounted himself; and Orlando, who had been disarmed, being bound hand and foot while Gustavus was speaking, was thrown across a mule, which was led by two robbers, who seemed more attached to their employer than the commander of

of

of the gang; and in a few minutes Leolfo was ready to bear his prisoners off.

"Stay! oh stay!" exclaimed Elvira. "Grant me one last embrace; let me clasp my child once more! Oh, Leolfo, spare my children, or take me with them!"

The monster drew his sword; while the frantic mother sunk in an agony at his feet, as he turned and galloped off. Her shrieks resounded through the wood for some minutes, but hastening on, he quickly got beyond the reach of them.

The indignation of Orlando was too great for utterance; and at sight of her mother's woes, Adela had lost all recollection; but the motion of the beast soon brought her to a sense of her miseries, as she found herself supported on horseback in the arms of Leolfo; and opening her eyes, she fixed them steadfastly on his.

Leolfo pressed an ardent kiss on her ruby lips, which so disgusted her, that,

for the first time, she spoke, saying—
“ Repeat that disgusting familiarity again, and I will become my own executioner !”

Leolfo smiling journeyed on, but did not repeat the insult.

In the mean time, Gustavus and Isis found it difficult to so far calm the grief of Elvira and Annette as to get them out of the forest, which it was advisable to quit, as it was not improbable but the count might return with a reinforcement of brigands, more devoted to his interest than Molino and his followers.

Donna Vedova, well knowing the feelings of a mother, took the hand of Elvira, saying—“ My beloved friend, your child is not beyond the reach of Providence; remember He is omnipotent, and will support the injured; nor do the tears of a fond parent fall unnoticed by Him. This trial is most likely sent to prove your reliance on
His

His strength, whose arm alone can restore your children."

Such reasoning as this in a small degree enabled Elvira to subdue the violence of her feelings; and the delicate light of the moon was receding from the glitter of the bright orb of day, as Gustavus and his friends left the skirts of the dreadful forest, and arrived, more dead than alive, at his residence. After a few hours consultation, they prepared to quit that retreat; for Gustavus dared not longer remain there, as he was fearful Leolfo knew where to find him, and certain that the wretch still had designs upon Isis; and he would, of course, inform De Torza where his wife was to be found.

Ill as Elvira was, there was no safety for her but in flight; and these persecuted persons left the peaceful residence of Gustavus, strongly guarded by all his men-servants, well armed, as soon as the heat of the midday sun had a little

abated. Terrified they fled, travelling with the utmost speed, scarcely stopping to refresh their mules, for Gustavus could not think his loved Isis safe, nor her partners in misfortune, till he had lodged them all in the convent of St. Michline, under the protection of his amiable aunt. He resided as near the convent as he conveniently could, and now turned his thoughts to Orlando, who had fallen into the hands of Leolfo, in generously delivering Isis from his grasp ; for it was plain, that as the party of Gustavus was first attacked, his was the family marked for destruction, and that the count had no knowledge of Orlando being near, till he obliged him to relinquish his hold on Isis. Orlando had by this act of humanity rescued Gustavus and Isis, but sacrificed himself and Adela.

Leolfo and his followers did not stop till the moon began to shew her face in an unclouded sky, and slanting her sil-
very

very beams between the trembling boughs, checkered the shadowy sod beneath them.

Orlando was taken off the mule, then tied to the trunk of a tree, his arms still pinioned; and the men who had guarded him threw themselves on the grass on each side of him.

Leolfo assisted Adela to alight, when she turned to him, saying—"If you do not intend to drive me to act in direct opposition to your wishes, permit me to speak a few words to Orlando."

The count hesitated a few moments, and replied—"In my presence, lady, you shall."

"Be it so," said Adela.

He led her within a few paces of Orlando, then putting his arm round her waist, said—"Here I hold you, lady—you go no nearer."

The sight of Adela encircled by the arm of his fell foe almost convulsed the frame of Orlando; when, she seeing the

conflict he endured, said—"Be calm, my beloved, fear not for me; try to live, and depend upon it we shall meet again. Thine Adela will set thee an example of fortitude!"

"Then I will follow it my love," replied Orlando.

"No more," interrupted Leolfo; "lady, you have had your boon—you must away."

She smiled on Orlando, and blew him a kiss, as the count tore her from him. He led her to a little distance on the skirts of the forest, where they entered a small cottage, kept by a woman of forbidding appearance, whom he familiarly addressed, saying—"Here, mother, I have brought you a lodger; let her want for nothing but liberty."

The woman courtesied, and immediately spread refreshments before them; but Adela would not taste any thing but a little water, and desired she might retire.

The

The hostess led the way, followed by Adela, when Leolfo said—"Cannot you blow me such a kiss as you blew Orlando a few minutes ago?"

"Count," replied Adela, "my conduct towards you will depend on the distance you keep."

Leolfo looked mortified; and Adela followed her landlady, who conducted her into a small neat bedroom, then setting down the lamp, left her without speaking, locking her in.

Adela saw there was nothing to hope from this woman, and taking her lamp, surveyed her apartment. On perceiving there was no fastening to the door on the inside, she drew the bed against it, then seating herself by the window, meditated on the unfortunate situation of herself and her husband. She petitioned Heaven to preserve him, as well as her dear mother, and to grant to herself sufficient fortitude to endure what she was destined to go through.

Having fortified her mind by prayer, she laid down in her clothes, not to sleep; for Adela was not like some heroines, who could always throw themselves and their troubles into the arms of Somnus, for the morning sun found her still waking.

The woman shortly after unlocked the door, but could not open it till Adela had removed the bed, when the hostess entered with breakfast. Adela partook of it, rightly considering that, if she abstained from food, she might probably sink under her misfortunes; and she knew that two dear lives hung upon hers.

While Adela was taking her breakfast, Leolfo wrote a note, which he sent by one of the marauders, addressed to De Torza. It was laconic, and ran in the following words:—"Count Leolfo sends greeting to don De Torza, and advises him to look to the left wing of his castle."

De

De Torza's consternation cannot be described when he read this strange epistle, which he perused, and reperused, but could not solve the enigma, and was inclined to think Leolfo had written it while under the influence of Bacchus. What could the count know about the left wing of his castle, when he was some leagues off? All the effect the note took on De Torza was, it reminded him it was time to visit his wife and daughter, and prepare them to receive Leolfo, who would shortly be there to claim his promise.

De Torza dismissed the bearer of the note with an answer which ran thus:—
“Don De Torza sends greeting to count Leolfo, and advises him not to write again till he is sober.”

De Torza then turned his steps to the apartments of Elvira, which consisted of the left wing alluded to by Leolfo. He unlocked the outer door, and was picturing to himself the tears and en-

treaties he should have to withstand, when his reverie was interrupted at not finding Elvira in the first apartment he entered, which was her drawing-room. He waited a minute, and then gave a stamp with his foot, which was his usual signal, if not attended to immediately. No one appeared, and his blood rose at the insult. He called, and no one answered. Indignation seized him, as he rushed from room to room, vowing to crush his intended victims to atoms if they did not instantly appear. The garden afforded him no better success, for echo returned his own voice only.

Gnashing his teeth with rage, he searched every corner of the building; when at last the note of Leolfo recurred to his recollection. The truth flashed upon his mind, and he foamed at the mouth as if labouring under hydrophobia.

De Torza was for once foiled, and seizing a table, he dashed it through the window,

window, broke every pane of glass on the premises, and hewed the furniture to pieces. How or when his captives had escaped, he could not form an idea. In this dilemma, rendered speechless by passion, he sought his old counsellor, Murdico, who came reeling from his favourite wine cave.

De Torza seized him, but could not articulate a syllable.

Murdico staggered and stared, yet could do nothing more than hiccup.

What a subject for the pencil! what a scene for Thalia did these two represent! The man was incapable of asking what was the matter, and the master had not power to explain; but dragging Murdico to the left wing, De Torza pointed to the havock he had made.

Still the man was without comprehension, and the master gave him a knock-down blow, where he lay long after the effect of the salutation was gone off, and fell into a sound sleep.

De

De Torza paced the apartment for two hours, when Murdico, having slept off the fumes of the wine, awoke, and his master had recovered his speech.

"They are gone!" he exclaimed, stamping.

Murdico rubbed his eyes, and asked who were gone?

"My wife and daughter," answered his master.

"Gone?" demanded Murdico; "how—when—where?"

"Fool!" returned De Torza, "if I could answer your questions I should know how to act, and where to find them!"

"Then we must be gone too," Murdico observed.

"Which way must we go, idiot?" demanded his master. "Oh that Leolfo was here! I should think the riches of Spain too little to give for his advice at this moment! However, it is of no use talking to such a sot as thee, so
order

order all my servants out, who are capable of bearing arms, and we will go to all points of the compass in search of these cursed women."

"Ay, ay, I thought the castle would be too small to hold you," the man observed, in a grumbling tone.

"Will you obey my orders?" asked the master.

Murdico went, but in a few minutes returned, saying—"Now I reflect, I have lost a daughter as well as you.—Pray where is Annette?"

"Gone to the devil, for aught I know," vociferated his master; "and if you linger there another moment, I will kick you after her!"

Murdico lifted up his hands, saying—"Lord, Lord, how we sober, steady, patient, prudent fathers are tormented with these runaway daughters! I forgot till this moment that I had one."

He went to execute his orders, and De Torza turned to follow him, but seeing

seeing a full-length portrait of Elvira, his rage almost amounted to madness, when, aiming a blow at the face, he struck his hand through the painting into a very large nail, which went into his hand at one part, and came out at another.

The anguish brought him to his senses, but he had struck with such violence, that he could not draw his hand back again, as it instantly began to swell, and in this painful situation he was found by Mordico.

The servants were quickly summoned to the relief of their lord, and after applying emollients, he had to endure the agonizing operation of having his hand drawn from off the rusty nail.

Instead of uttering execrations against his wife and daughter, this haughty man gave one deep groan, which the anguish he endured forced from him, and was conveyed to his chamber. Surgical aid was obtained with all speed, but in spite of

of every exertion to prevent it, a high fever ensued, partly owing to the pain of his hand, and partly owing to the irritable state his blood was in; and there was every reason to expect a mortification would take place.

Thus the proud De Torza was laid low, with the consoling reflection, that he was the victim of his own passion. Delirium conquered his strong mind, and he laid an imbecile wretch, without friend or relative to smooth his pillow.

Yet such was the high sense of rectitude possessed by Elvira and Adela, that, had they known the sufferings of their husband and father, they would have flown to his relief, and have left the remembrance of their injuries at the threshold of his door.

On the third day after the accident De Torza's recollection returned, and he distinctly articulated the name of Francisco.

Murdico immediately sent for the jolly priest,

priest, who had been the means of saving the arm of Leolfo; for he it was who instructed the unfortunate Felicia how to proceed when she personated the nurse.

Francisco quickly arrived, and after quaffing a tankard of wine, examined the state of the patient, and found but little reason to hope. However, he acted according to the best of his judgment, which was to be equalled but by few. The fever abated, the wound in the hand put on a more favourable appearance, for it may be supposed De Torza's time was not yet come.

He hailed Francisco as his preserver; loaded him with benefits; but what tended most to his recovery was the following circumstance. The bell at the great gate of the castle was rung one night about eleven o'clock. Some strangers demanded an immediate interview with the lord of the domain.

As De Torza never knew what fear
was,

was, and being able to sit up, he ordered them to be admitted.

Several persons entered, enveloped in cloaks. One, who seemed to be their leader, stepped a few paces before the rest, saying in a feigned voice—"About seventeen years ago, I had the pleasure of making don De Torza a present of his wife; I now can double the value of that gift, by placing in his hands his son and daughter."

He tore their cloaks off in a moment, when Orlando and Adela stood before De Torza.

The leader laid his own cloak aside, then doffed his hat, when De Torza beheld Leolfo. He hugged the count with rapture, called him the beloved brother of his soul, and in the joy of the moment, even forgot to curse his unfortunate daughter and Orlando.

Leolfo, who determined to surprise all parties, in order to prevent his captives knowing whither he was conducting

ing them, placed a bandage before their eyes, and covered their persons with large cloaks; when Adela stipulated, that Orlando should not be thrown across a mule, as on the first day, but be permitted to ride as usual. Leolfo, willing to appear in the eyes of Adela something better than he really was, complied, taking care to place four guards round Orlando.

Leolfo might have arrived at the castle of De Torza in less time, had he not taken a circuitous route, for fear he should meet Molino, who, he feared, would wrest his prisoners from him.

The malevolence of Leolfo, in thus betraying his captives into the hands of De Torza, corresponded with the rest of his conduct. It is true, he meant to espouse Adela, and would have taken some pains to obtain her good opinion, could he have parted with the desire of revenge against Orlando; for he had not forgot the transactions at the Escorial.

The

The terror of Adela, on beholding her father so unexpectedly, shook her every limb; yet she did not faint, as many heroines would have done, but kneeling to De Torza, said—"Orlando is blameless, the fault alone was mine—spare him, and——"

"Spare the devil as likely," replied her father.

Orlando stood with his arms folded, buried in the contemplation of the bitter fate which pursued him; till roused by the voice of Adela, and raising his eyes from off the ground, he said—"Rise, my Adela—entreat not for me, 'tis useless."

The count slowly went up to him, pointing to his right arm, which at times he was obliged to wear in a sling, and with a demoniac smile, said—"Young man, do you remember this? your time of retribution is come—it is now my turn to triumph!"

Be

"Be it so," replied Orlando; "yet the triumph of the wicked is short."

"Do you still retain your hardihood?" asked the count.

Orlando answered—"To the last gasp of existence will I despise the secret assassin Leolfo!"

The count laid his hand on the hilt of his sword, while Adela shrieked, as she threw herself before Orlando.—"My Adela," said he, raising her, "why this agitation? Whatever my enemies may threaten, they dare not take my life, for reasons known to themselves."

De Torza and Leolfo looked surprised, but made no reply.

Adela gave vent to her feelings, by shedding a few tears of anguish, when Orlando said—"Where, my beloved, is that example of fortitude you promised to set me?"

"My future conduct will prove," Adela answered, as she dried her tears.

"What means this dalliance?" exclaimed

claimed De Torza, stamping ; “separate these two instantly!”

As Leolfo attempted to drag Orlando away, Adela turned to him, saying—
“Count, as you treat Orlando, so will you gain my favour.” Guard him, as you would your own life ; be kinder to him than you would to the mistress of your affections ; harm not a single hair of his head—and Adela will learn to esteem him she has hitherto hated !”

“Amazement !” exclaimed De Torza. “Is the girl deranged ?—Murdico, take charge of her till further orders.—Count, I give my rebellious son into your keeping.”

“My father !” said Adela, kneeling at De Torza’s feet.

“Peace ! disobedient girl, of a rebellious wife,” he vociferated ; “remember, from this hour I disown thee !” Then addressing his servants, he added—“Away with these two curses of my life—separate them for ever !”

Murdico

Murdico was conducting his young mistress towards one door, while Leolfo was dragging his prisoner through another, at the opposite end of the apartment, when Orlando broke from him, clasped Adela in his arms, who sprang to meet him, and whispered something in her ear. The action was so sudden, their enemies could not prevent it.—

“Now, my Adela,” said Orlando, embracing her, “our persecutors cannot deceive us, if you understood me.”

“I did,” she replied, returning his embrace, “and will remember.”

Their enemies again separated them, when Orlando said to Leolfo—“Act your part coolly, count—I am ready to follow you.”

“Insolence!” returned the count, with a malicious grin. He led his prisoner across the great hall, into a small library, which opened into a range of rooms, through which they passed, and came into a large closet, that contained only a landing-

landing-place, belonging to a zig-zag staircase, which they descended; but their progress was impeded by a heavy iron door at the bottom, whose rusty bolts had not been undrawn for thirty years. This obstruction did not heighten the good humour of Leolfo, who commanded the bravoes he brought with him to the castle, and who followed the count at his beck to this part of the building, to force open the door, which after repeated efforts they effected; and descending another flight of steps, the party arrived at a narrow corridor, at the end of which was a small dungeon, secured with innumerable fastenings.—

“Here,” said the count, ushering in his prisoner, “you will remain till I have espoused the lady Adela.”

“Then here I shall willingly remain for life,” said Orlando.

“Your bed will be straw, your food bread, your drink water, and your

company vermin," observed Leolfo, "till I espouse the lady."

"All which I hail with pleasure, so that Adela is not thine," replied Orlando.

The count was going to say something more, but Orlando waved him to depart; and Leolfo fastened the door with bitter execrations, vowing his prisoner should never have his freedom, unless Adela purchased it by sacrificing herself.

Orlando, after viewing his abode, which was not more than ten feet square, and recollecting the way he was conducted to it, found he was under the left wing of the castle—that very spot where he had passed the only happy hours he had known since he was torn from the peaceful cot of Mezenza.

Adela was led by Murdico in a contrary direction, who was preceding her, when she stepped before him, saying—
"Recollect, I am De Torza's daughter;
tell

tell me which way to go, and do you follow at your proper distance."

Murdico stood still to gape at her with astonishment, then directed her to the right wing of the castle; and after many turnings and windings, they ascended a flight of stairs, which led to a room at the top of that part of the building, when he told her that was to be her apartment.

"Then begone," said Adela; "and if you are to be my gaoler, let me see as little of you as possible."

Murdico bowed, and locked her in.

Adela burst into a paroxysm of grief when alone, not on her own account, for she was careless of herself; but she felt with intensity for those she loved. What were the sufferings of her husband—where was her beloved mother driven to? Alike uncertain of the fate of these two dear relatives, she thought no arm but that of Omnipotence could save them, and to Heaven she turned for

help, where no one ever applied in vain.

Her apartment contained a table, a chair, and a straw mattress, laid down in one corner; though if it had been furnished with splendour, her mind was too much occupied with her troubles to notice it. Having thrown herself on this lowly bed, in her clothes, she remained with unclosed eyes till the door of her apartment was unlocked the next morning, and Leolfo entered.

Adela arose, and at sight of the man she detested, regained the natural vigour of her mind, which till this moment had lain dormant.

"Angel of my destiny," said Leolfo, seizing her hand, "I come to offer you liberty, riches, title, pleasure—everything this world affords. Say, oh say, you will accept them!"

"Count," replied Adela, withdrawing her hand, "on what terms do you make your proposals?"

"On.

"On your marriage with me," he answered.

"Then may your offers perish with you!" said Adela.

"Is this the answer I am to convey to your father?" asked Leolfo.

"It is," she answered; "and tell him that rather than give my hand to the monster he has chosen for me, I will endure all that the black heart of Leolfo can invent."

"Adela," said the count, kneeling, "hear me; you have it in your power to make of me either angel or devil! Accept me, and I will forsake the evil of my way—reject me, and I will plunge still deeper into iniquity, to seek a revenge that shall requite your scorn!"

"Away, monster, and do your worst," she replied; "for with detestation I reject thee!"

He sprang up, and locked the door, muttering to himself—"Orlando shall smart for this!"

Adela shrieked—"Spare, oh spare Orlando! return, for mercy's sake, Leolfo—grant me some little time!" But Leolfo was gone, and left Adela to the horror of her feelings.

A month passed before the count paid her another visit, during which time she had been supplied by the hands of Murdico, with food and change of clothes, through a panel in the door, which was made to open. Early on the morning of this second visit, Adela heard a noise at her window, which was too high for her to reach, and was strongly secured with iron bars, but had no glass in it, which was unnecessary in that climate. She looked up pensively at the window, and was almost wild with joy, on beholding a visitor making his way through; and in a moment the welcome guest was lodged in her bosom. It was her favourite dove; embrace after embrace succeeded; for Adela almost smothered her darling with caresses. As she was
stroking

stroking its beautiful plumage, she perceived something rustle under its wing, and to her infinite surprise saw a slip of paper tied under its wing, with a silk thread ; when untying it, she read these words—"Orlando lives!"

"Thanks be to Heaven !" she exclaimed, falling on her knees, while tears of joy prevented further utterance ; yet her heart expanded with gratitude. Again she caressed the little messenger, which she had reared from the nest ; for a pair of doves had built in a tree in the garden, belonging to the left wing of the castle, and by accident one of the eggs had fallen out and broke, so that this little creature never had a mate ; and as the parent doves were by no means shy, Adela used frequently to visit them, to admire their beautiful nestling ; and when they were about to forsake it, she took it under her own guardianship.

Scarcely had Adela time to hide her

favourite behind the mattress, ere a key was put into the lock of the door, and Leolfo once more stood before her.—“I come, Adela,” said he, “in hopes that time has abated your determination.”

“Time,” she answered, “has only strengthened my aversion to you. There was one way, count, by which you might have gained my gratitude; but your having pursued a contrary course, I every hour detest you more.”

“I understand you,” said Leolfo; “but perhaps this paper will speak more plainly than any thing I can say.”

He gave her a paper, apparently in the handwriting of Orlando. The contents ran thus—“My Adela will not, I am sure she will not, resist the pleadings of her attached Orlando; nor would he importune her, to act contrary to the dictates of honour and virtue. By giving her hand to count Leolfo, she will emancipate her beloved brother from a loathsome dungeon, where he must shortly

shortly draw his last breath, as disease is making hasty strides over his once vigorous constitution. 'Tis Orlando pleads, and Adela cannot deny."

She returned the paper to Leolfo, saying—"You are an excellent copyist, count; but though you have deceived many, I am not of the number. The sentiments are not those of Orlando, nor is the handwriting his. I grant the imitation is so great, that any one except myself would be led into error by it; but my opinion with regard to you remains unchanged."

When Adela and Orlando were separated the last time, he whispered something in her ear, which was, that if any one presented writing to her, saying it was his, she might be sure it was a forgery, if there was not a small dot in the left hand corner of the paper at the bottom. The writing presented by Leolfo was perfect in every respect except the dot.

The count's disappointment was visible, as Adela returned the paper; and he attempted to plead, when she thus addressed him—"Let this be the last time you mention a subject that is hateful to me; for no suffering that cruelty can invent will make me yield to your wishes. You have separated me from all I love on earth, and have isolated me here; then here, at least, let me remain in peace. Go, and if your nature contains one spark of humanity, let me never see you more!"

Leolfo bit his lips, as he, stamping, left the apartment without reply. He discontinued his visits for some time, but continually sent her letters in the handwriting of Orlando, to all appearance—yet they wanted the little dot.

De Torza had not hitherto interfered between his daughter and Leolfo, but had left him to make love his own way.

Adela bore her solitary confinement with firmness; for though she could see

no signs of relief, she placed her confidence in Him who never failed; and found much consolation in her little dove, who never left her but when it went to seek for food, she not having any proper for it. On returning, the dove had several times a slip of paper fastened under its wing, with assurances of Orlando's safety, though he was still in confinement. What a balm was this intelligence to her heart!

She had been three months imprisoned, when at the hour of twelve one night, her door was opened, and a figure dressed exactly as her mother described the Brazen Mask, entered her room. He wore a long black cloak, a large Spanish hat, with a plume of black feathers, and had concealed his face by a mask of brass.

Adela shrieked, and he drew back; yet she could perceive, by the lamp he held in his hand, that he was still on the outside the door. She arose, and hastily

dressed herself, as quickly as her agitation would permit—when in a few minutes he entered again. He motioned her to follow him, when she exclaimed—“Monster! what want you with me?”

“Follow!” said the Mask.
“Wretch,” replied Adela, “Leolfo was always sufficiently disgusting in my eyes; he need not assume his favourite garb to render himself still more odious.”

“Follow!” reiterated the Mask.
“I will not,” she answered.

He seized her by the arm, then dragged her down the first flight of stairs, along several winding passages, and many other staircases; till traversing this secret way near a quarter of an hour, they came to a dungeon, which the Mask unfastened, and thrusting his victim in, pointed to the dead body of a man, stretched on some straw.

Adela stood speechless; her eyeballs seemed starting from their sockets; her hair stood erect; and she fell with a deep

deep groan on the body of Orlando. Suspension of animation for a while suspended her miseries; delirium for a time kindly drew its fanciful curtain round her mind, and hid the real state of her wretchedness from herself.

On regaining her powers of perception she found herself in her old prison, at the top of the building, stretched on her mattress. She felt something move in her bosom, and putting her hand to it, found it to be her dear little dove that was nestling there. Her recollection returned; the truth struck to her heart, and she would have given worlds to have resigned her senses for ever. Tears at last relieved her, being the first she had shed since the night the Mask entered her prison.

How hapless was her situation! Bereft of every friend, in the power of the man her soul recoiled at, uncertain as to the fate of her amiable mother, and her faithful Annette, her beloved Orlando

lost

lost to her for ever, and her constitution weakened by heavy affliction! Yet in this state there was one incitement for her to live; there was one object which could attach her to the world—she felt she should ere long become a mother.

In the midst of this pleasing, painful reflection, a girl about eleven years of age came into her apartment, who was the daughter of one of the gardeners; and after adjusting the furniture, which had been increased since Adela's illness, offered her something to drink, which she took without speaking.

Lina then stroked the dove, saying—
 "Stay there, you sweet creature, for though your poor mistress is insensible of being here, yet it is better to have you near her, if she should recover, than to be quite alone. Oh, gemini, if I was always by myself, I should be glad of the company of a 'spider'!" She then gave Adela some medicine, which she swallowed, when the girl added—"Ah,

poor

poor

poor thing! if one was to give you poison you would take it, without saying a word; but I would not do so.—No, I would not take a dose of physic for all the world!”

Lina then left her patient, and the door was fastened on the outside by Murdico, who always locked and unlocked it when any one entered or quitted the room.

Adela was pleased with her new attendant, for she possessed innocent simplicity, blended with humanity.

The beautiful dove again moved, and drew the attention of its mistress, who once more caressed her favourite, and found a slip of paper under its wing; but she was almost too weak to read. The contents were these:—“Fear not, lady, you have a friend in the castle yet; only try to live, and you shall rise superior to your foes.”

For the sake of her unborn infant she determined to take the advice of her

unknown friend, and endeavour to live ; for the child was her beloved Orlando's.

Lina visited her patient many times in the day, administering medicine, and some slight nutriment, which Adela swallowed mechanically, without betraying she was better, fearing Leolfo would visit her if it was known she was in any degree recovered.

De Torza and Leolfo entered her apartment in the evening, when the former sitting down by the side of the bed, looking steadfastly at her, said—
“This then is all that is left of my once beautiful daughter ! Your stratagem has destroyed her, count !”

“Not in my opinion,” Leolfo replied ;
“for she is lovely still ; and even now I am willing to espouse her.”

“Would you marry a mad woman ?” asked De Torza.

“If that woman was Adela,” Leolfo answered.

“I must confess you have most right
to

to be burdened with the future care of her," De Torza observed, "as you have been the cause of plunging her in the state she is now in."

"I certainly did not foresee the turn my plan would take," said the count; "what could possess her to feel such an unbounded affection for that cursed Orlando?"

"You may depend upon it, hers was something more than a sisterly regard," answered De Torza; "for though they never knew but one mother bore them, Orlando and Adela have loved from childhood, which after circumstances have convinced me of."

More conversation followed, and it was agreed that, whether Adela regained her senses or not, Leolfo should espouse her as soon as her health would permit. Her father and lover left her to meditate on this pleasing reflection.

Adela could see no way of escape, yet she did not cease to hope and pray
for

for deliverance: she relied much on the promises of her secret friend, and more on those of her Heavenly Father.

Lina constantly attended her, expressing great pleasure about her patient taking some food; when Adela could not refrain from thanking her little nurse for the kindness she had shewn her.

“Oh, donna, how glad I am to hear you speak!” said Lina; “this is the first time you have uttered a syllable since you was taken ill. I have such a deal to tell you. But mind one thing—do not let that ugly old skeleton count know you are better; for he will be sure to do something to plague you. St. Ursula forgive me, how I do hate him! He looks just like a corpse gliding about the place. I thought I had a great deal of news to tell you, but thinking of that old wizzard has put it all out of my head. Let me see—in the first place, you are to be married to him, when

when Francisco returns from Saragossa; and then you are to be taken from here to one of his own castles: this I overheard this morning. In the next place, there is another person confined here besides you, but whether it is man or woman I have not found out yet, there is so much secrecy observed. And, in the next place, I am going to be made very rich, for shewing a little kindness to you. Here is a beautiful rosary, with a cross to it; and this ring, as well as this gold doubloon, were all given to me on your account; and I am to have heaps of gold, if I can but make you well. There's news!"

"You shall not go unrewarded, my young friend. But who has given you all these presents?" said Adela.

"Oh, I do not know, any more than you do," replied Lina.

"You do not know!" asked Adela, in amazement.

"No, that I do not," Lina answered:

"all

"all I know is, that by the voice, I suppose it to be a young man; for I can always find him, at the hour of five in the morning, behind the statue of St. Peter, in the north corridor, according to his own appointment; but then he is so muffled up that I never saw him."

Adela's heart fluttered with hope, for she thought this must be her unknown friend, and she asked Lina if she should meet this person on the following morning?

"To be sure I shall," the little maid replied; "for he desires me not to miss one day informing him how you go on."

"Then tell him I am getting rapidly better, and shall soon be able to act as he directs," said Adela.

"Oh," interrupted Lina, "what loads of beautiful things he will give me for such news as that!"

She left her mistress, who, except the melancholy occasioned by dwelling on the death of her husband, was fast recovering;

covering; for the wish that her child should not be born in the castle of its father's foes, made her take all the nourishment she could, in order to gain her strength to escape.

Adela had been on the mending hand three weeks, during which time she had received several slips of paper, conveyed by the dove, with assurances that every thing for her emancipation would shortly be ready; her secret friend judging it safer to send intelligence by the dove than by Lina.

Adela was sitting up, when her little nurse rushed into her apartment in a hurry, to inform her Francisco was just arrived, and she added—"I wish, donna, it was possible to make you very ill for a few minutes, just while the fat priest pays you a visit; for not any one knows you are better, as I have always brought you part of my own meals, for fear they should know you was able to eat food like other people."

Adela's

Adela's terror was greater than her maid's; and before they had time to devise any plan, Francisco, Leolfo, and De Torza, entered.

The priest felt his patient's pulse, which he said beat more irregularly than usual; yet her strength was gaining ground, though her senses were perhaps gone for ever, or could only be restored by time.

"That information is sufficient," said Leolfo; "you have performed the part of physician well—change the character for that of priest." Then he added, turning to De Torza—"The ceremony may as well be performed now."

"If it must come to that," replied De Torza—

"It must, and shall," said the count, interrupting him.

De Torza ordered Francisco to perform the marriage ceremony immediately.

The priest began, when Adela exclaimed—

claimed—"Stop! By the babe in my womb, I swear never to be the wife of Leolfo! Near twelve months have I been united to the only man who ever possessed my heart—my lost Orlando; the register of my marriage is safely lodged in the hands of the abbot of St. Benedict, who will never part with it, except he places it in the hands of his majesty. I did not inform you of my marriage before, lest it should endanger the life of my husband; but, alas! you have torn him from me, without that incitement to your revenge!" Then turning to Leolfo, she added—"If my unborn child is a daughter, I will teach her to loathe the name of Leolfo; if it is a son, I will rear him to scourge his father's murderer!"

Not any thing could equal the astonishment of the three gentlemen present, who were too much confounded to interrupt her, till the count exclaimed—

"Incest!"

"Incest! She has married her brother!"

"No, monster, I have not!" she replied; "for Orlando was not the son of my father, nor of my mother."

"Amazement!" exclaimed De Torza.

"Under the present circumstances it is useless to proceed," said Francisco, closing his book; and the crest-fallen trio quitted the apartment.

Adela sunk on a chair exhausted, feeling very ill for some time after; till relieved by her little messenger, who in about an hour came fluttering in between the iron bars of her window, with intelligence under its wing, which ran thus—"Be calm, lady; collect your fortitude, and do as Lina directs; only be sure to bring your aerial friend with you."

Adela rose superior to her troubles, and pressing the dove to her bosom, said—"This shall be thy resting-place."

About nine o'clock in the evening she

she heard some one trying to unlock the door, and was kept in suspense several minutes, till Lina entered, saying—“I should make a bad gaoler, donna, for I have been half an hour trying to get the door open, though I had the key.”

“How came you by it?” Adela asked.

“Oh, I stole it,” answered the maid.

“You must know old Beelzebub, commonly called Murdico, was staggering about in his paradise of a wine cave, when I watched my opportunity to creep there unperceived by any one, and stole the key out of his girdle. But come, now for news. The castle is in an uproar! My master and that bewitching count are quarrelling like two lions; there’s fun for you! In the next place, that Mr. Nobody, who I am sure must be somebody, who meets me behind old Peter every morning, saw me go from your room when these three gentlemen entered it, and beckoned me to follow him, which I did, till we came

to our old hiding-place.—‘Lina,’ said he, ‘have you courage to assist your lady?’—‘Oh, that I have,’ said I, ‘for I care for nobody.’ Then he told me I must go and rob Murdico of the key, who was too much overcome with wine to know who was the thief. I accordingly got the key, and returned for more instructions.—‘Now, Lina,’ said that good creature, who gives me such presents, ‘you must change clothes with your mistress, and tell her to meet me here, while every body’s attention is engaged with the disturbance between the count and don De Torza.’ That Mr. Unknown told me, you must be sure to trip gaily along, just as I do; and therefore you must sing, donna, for I very often sing. Now,” added Lina, “we have no time to lose, and must undress while I finish my budget.”

They began to change clothes, and Lina continued—“I shall be richer than any one here; for look, lady, in the corner

ner

ner of this basket—there, all these doubloons are mine, given to me just now by that man, who is made of gold. I popped them into my basket, and covered them with figs, and oranges, and grapes; for you must know I am to stay in your place till you are missed; but I do not intend to live on air and physic, as you have done, so I have brought plenty of nice things with me, and a parcel of romances, and a little kitten to make me some fun.”

Adela could not help smiling at the artless gaiety of her young attendant, but said—“When I am missed, Lina, what will you do then?”

“Why laugh at them to be sure, for being outmatched by a girl,” she answered. “Their wise heads would not let any of the women-servants attend you, for fear they should assist you; but chose me, because they thought I was a child and a fool: but they will some time find I have played them a trick!”

La, donna, how short my petticoats are for you !”

Adela perceived the truth of Lina's last remark, but could not lengthen them ; and placing her dove in her bosom, then embracing her young friend, was ready to sally forth.

“ Suppose, donna,” said Lina, “ you lock me in, and leave the key outside ; old Beelzebub may perhaps think he left it there himself, when he was not in his sober senses ; and then we may not be found out so soon.”

Adela approved of the thought, and once more taking leave of her little nurse, had put the key into the lock, when Lina called through the keyhole—“ Mind that you sing, donna.”

Adela could not obey the last injunction, but fled with the greatest precipitation, till hearing the voices of her father and the count, she trembled so violently, as to be unable to proceed. She leaned against a carved image of St.

Augustine,

Augustine, which had stood on his pedestal so long, that being worn out with time, or no admirer of the softer sex, the ungallant saint fell down headlong, refusing his support to a lady. The noise resounded down the great staircase, and brought the housekeeper to the spot, who, not perceiving Adela, fell on her knees, saying—"Saint Augustine, and all the saints forgive me, though I did pilfer a few doubloons out of my master's chest! it need not have angered his saintship so much, as to move his image to reproach me; but I will count my beads from morn to night for a week to come."

This apostrophe gave Adela time to rally her spirits, who left the penitent to appease the rigid saint as she could; and trebled her speed till she came to the statue of St. Peter, behind which she saw a person enveloped in a cloak. He gently took her hand, saying—"Fear

not, lady—calm your feelings—not a moment is to be lost.”

He drew her arm within his, and travelled with incredible swiftness some parts of the building Adela had never been in before, till they came to a damp narrow passage, which led to the vault that had been so often visited by Adela. The stranger led her to the coffin of her friend, dropped on one knee, threw off his cloak, and proved to be—Jacobo.—“ Here, lady,” said he, “ I first swore to protect you, should misfortune drive you to want my assistance ; and I now again repeat my oath. Here, likewise, I once more swear to avenge the death of my loved Felicia, whose dear remains nothing could make me quit, but the hope of serving you.” He bowed over the coffin, remained a few moments silent, then taking Adela’s hand, with a deep sigh turned away.

Jacobo conducted her through an open door, that was concealed behind one of the
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the abutments in the vault, which he fastened after they had passed it; then descending a flight of dilapidated steps, took up his lamp, which he had previously placed at the bottom, and opened another door, securing it on the outside. They were now in a subterraneous pass of several miles in length, and Jacobo stopping, said—"Now, lady, we may venture to speak. I have conveyed every thing here we are likely to want; only keep up your spirits, and I will free you from your enemies, or die in the attempt."

He presented her with refreshments, and persuaded her to take a little wine, that the dampness of the place might not affect her. He had provided a Moorish dress for Adela, and another for himself, with a liquid that instantly dyed the skin; then leaving her to equip herself, he shortly after returned in his Moorish costume.

"It is now time I told you my plan,"

H 4

said

said Jacobo. "In order to elude pursuit, I propose you to appear something opposite to what you are; therefore we must beg our way through the towns and villages we have to pass; and for that purpose, our dresses are made to suit such characters. You must pardon what I am going to add, lady, but your situation compels me to advise, that in public you condescend to pass for my wife; in private, I will observe the most distant respect that delicacy can exact."

"I will rely on your honour, my friend," said Adela, "and act as you direct, having no one to defend me but yourself; for alas, I have lost my lord, my life, my husband! Where have they interred his ashes?"

"No one at present knows," Jacobo answered, "but I will find out; for when I have placed you in safety, I shall return to the castle, for more purposes than one."

Adela proceeded, supported by her friend,

friend, and guided by the light of the lamp he held in his hand, till they came near the termination of the pass; during the time, he related to her the method he had had recourse to, in order to assist her. He informed her, that on the third day after the arrival of Orlando and herself at the castle, he got leave of absence for six months, pretending he wished to visit his father, whom he had not seen from childhood, as he lived in a distant part of the country. The count readily seconded his request, who had not forgotten the oath of Jacobo, to avenge the death of Felicia, which was repeated to the count by one of the servants, who had conceived some cause of umbrage against Jacobo. De Torza yielded, and Jacobo was escorted by some of his fellow-servants, who professed great friendship for him, with Murdico at their head, till they were several miles distant from the castle; then leaving Jacobo to pursue his way, who travelled on twenty

miles further, and returned by a circuitous route to the domain of his master, entering by the subterraneous pass, which was known to few, if any, besides himself.

The castle of Toledo had been a strong Moorish castle of defence against the Spaniards; and the subterraneous avenue had been dug by the Moors, through which they conveyed immense treasure, unknown to their enemies. Jacobo had thus free egress and regress to the castle, having lived, unknown to any one, in the unfrequented parts of the building, subsisting above three months on fruits only, and was the writer of the slips of paper conveyed to Adela, under the wing of her faithful dove. He had much to arrange, which will shortly be perceived, and was long perplexed to find a person to assist him in Adela's escape, till he fixed upon Lina.

Adela and her guide emerged from their subterraneous journey, at the end
of

of the pass, which terminated in a monument of black marble, in one corner of the churchyard of St. Paul, on the south side of the city of Toledo.

Jacobo said he should not shun the most populous parts of the town, for it was probable the count would look for his victim in sequestered places, if he searched for her out of the castle. It was not possible her enemies could suppose Jacobo was the partner of her flight, as it was not known he had been near the place for several months.

Jacobo had a fine, deep, bass voice, whose mellow tones oft vibrated to the heart. He told Adela, that as his finances were low, he should sing his way through all the public places they were to pass, till they gained the seashore. He accordingly began his vocal performance in one of the principal streets of Toledo, with Adela leaning on his arm, in pitiable agitation of being discovered; though it was not likely, for

her Moorish dress of a beggar, her deep olive complexion, and her apparently being the wife of the singer, were traits so different to the daughter of De Torza, that if her father had seen her, it is not probable he could have identified her.

At night they put up at a posada, or small inn, and after partaking of a frugal repast, Adela retired to rest, Jacobo choosing to sleep in the open air, which is no uncommon thing in that country.

In the morning they quitted Toledo without exciting suspicion, and begged their way through the towns of Estella, Malagon, Alamillo, Cordova, Lebrisea, &c. &c. till they came to the seashore, where was a vessel moored, waiting for their reception.

The ladies had given liberally to Jacobo, whose deep tones struck deeply to their hearts; and the gentlemen gave still more largely, on account of his apparent wife, whose situation indicated her near approach to an *accouchement*.

The

The country parts of their journey were performed by Adela on a mule, which was led by Jacobo on one side, and the muleteer on the other. Thus the daughter of one of the richest men in Spain was beholden to the charity of a generous public for support.

Jacobo had been assisted by the abbot of St. Benedict with the sums of money he had hitherto expended in the escape of Adela, which were nearly exhausted in hiring the vessel to wait her arrival, in purchasing clothes, and making presents to Lina. Their departure from the castle was so sudden, he had not time to apply to the abbot for more; but as necessity is the best spur for invention, Jacobo ingeniously thought of turning his voice to some advantage, which proved successful.

Adela being placed on board, the sails were unfurled, and the vessel was steered to the island of Canary, where it arrived in safety; for Jacobo thought there
would

would be no place of refuge for Adela in the Spanish dominions, knowing the search which would be made after her. Our travellers disembarked, when Jacobo conducted her to a fisherman's hut on the seashore, with whom he had previously agreed for the accommodation of Adela, this man being father to one of the sailors belonging to the vessel they came in. Jacobo recommended his charge in strong terms to the fisherman's wife, intimating that according to her care, such would be her recompence.

He took leave of Adela, saying, life and death depended on his return immediately, went on board that night, and set sail back again in the same vessel the next morning. He gave her nearly all the money he had, promising to bring her a fresh supply when he had seen the friendly abbot.

Adela felt alone in the world, or as if she was dropped from the clouds, being
in

in a strange island, not near a single creature whom she knew, torn from every friend that was dear to her.

On the fifth day after her arrival, she gave birth to a fine infant, and clasping her darling boy to her heart, she no longer felt alone.

The fisherman was shrewd and avaricious; he judged, from Jacobo remaining on board all night, instead of being at the cot with his new lodger, that some mystery was attached to her. He gave his son the hint, desiring him to follow Jacobo, unperceived, on his landing in Spain, and try if something could not be made by a disclosure of the place of refuge the lady was in; for the old man said he was sure she had not always been a beggar, neither could two beggars hire a vessel exclusively for themselves, and keep it waiting so long as they had done.

Jacobo, unconscious that his actions were watched, after quitting the vessel, travelled

travelled with the utmost rapidity to the castle of Toledo, with the sailor at his heels. His haste was such, that he did not stop an hour to rest himself, which was more than the sailor could support, who, having stopped to take a draught of wine within ten miles of Toledo, found it refreshed him so much, that he called for another, and then another, till he forgot the object of his chase, and sunk into a sound sleep.

The cause of Jacobo's haste was unknown to Adela; and on his arrival at the castle, he found affairs stood as he anticipated.

Adela being placed in safety, Jacobo now felt himself at liberty to act; and, sanctioned by the abbot, he sent one of the monks express to Madrid, offering, if the king would grant him such a force as was mentioned, that he would deliver the Brazen Mask into his majesty's hands.

The offer was gladly accepted, when
those

those belonging to the court of Spain who were intrusted with the secret, were on tiptoe to know who this singular character was. Ferdinand promised Jacobo an unbounded recompence, judging it best that the whole force employed on this occasion should be under the sole direction of Jacobo, who refused his majesty's reward, but accepted the guidance of the troops.

Jacobo having accomplished one particular affair within the walls of the castle, which will hereafter be known, ordered the soldiers to arrive in small detachments, under cover of the night, and enter the monument of black marble in one corner of the churchyard of St. Paul, on the south side of the city of Toledo, which was the beginning of the secret pass that belonged to the castle.

Jacobo found it necessary to send the monk again with an express order for the troops not to proceed to Toledo, but be immediately embarked for the island

island of Canary, where he would himself join them.

The reason of this alteration was occasioned by Jacobo seeing the sailor enter the castle, who, after waking from his intoxication, and missing the object of his pursuit, determined not to return till he had accomplished his purpose.

He described Jacobo, who before he arrived at the castle had not opportunity to change his Moorish dress ; and sometimes the sailor was directed right and sometimes wrong, till tracing and retracing the ground over and over, he found, after a great loss of time, that the object of his search was last seen in the neighbourhood of the castle, and applied there for information. Jacobo, who had now changed his dress to that of a monk, saw the sailor enter, and guessed his errand.

He feared that, notwithstanding the precautions he had taken, Adela must still fall into the hands of the count, if she

she was living, as he knew that the time of her *accouchement* was now over.

He communicated his apprehensions, in part, to a friend who had resided with him several days in the subterraneous pass, but yet dared not trust him with the whole of the circumstances; and they, assuming the dress of Moors, instantly set forward to the seashore.

The captain by whom Jacobo went before was waiting for passengers to fill his vessel, and gladly agreed, on account of the liberal pay of Jacobo, to convey him again to the island, as well as his friend. Jacobo thought he could arrive quicker this way at the island of Canary than if he went round to join the troops, as that would occasion delay on both sides.

The captain said he had lost one of his sailors, who quitted the vessel the morning Jacobo returned to Spain, and had not been heard of since. He supposed the poor fellow must either have
fallen

fallen into the hands of banditti, or the arms of the ladies, which, in his opinion, were alike dangerous.

Jacobo did not notice that he had seen this treacherous tar, but said he would supply his place, in assisting to work the vessel over, which would amuse him. His friend wished to take part in the exertion, but his wan countenance, which indicated a deep decline, contradicted his assertions, that his strength was sufficient to the task. Jacobo plied harder than any one on board, and the vessel once more stood towards the desired haven.

A light breeze swelled the sails, when Neptune again guided the vessel over the swelling bosom of the ocean, which contained the faithfullest servant that ever swore fealty to an unfortunate mistress. Jacobo would have thought the loss of life too small a sacrifice for the defence of Adela; yet so pure were his motives, that his every affection lay buried

buried in the coffin of Felicia. It was the confidence that the spirit of Felicia would look down with approbation on his exertions for the good of Adela, which recompensed him for the persevering fatigues he underwent; for Jacobo alone knew they were sisters by the father's side.

On mooring the vessel, every one on board, except Jacobo, was surprised to see the haven filled with the ships of Ferdinand. Another vessel, which seemed not to belong to government, cast anchor about an hour after, which not a little buoyed up the spirits of Jacobo.

He went in a boat to the ship of the commander of the forces, who waited to receive directions from him. Jacobo ordered the general not to disembark a man till the passengers in the vessel which arrived last were landed, to take particular care that vessel did not escape, and to ask no questions. The general was then to land his troops as secretly

as

as possible, deposite them on that side the rock next to the sea, and not to commence an attack without Jacobo gave the signal, which was to be the word—"Felicia."

He then landed, and went to the fisherman's hut in quest of Adela, having desired his friend to enter the fourth cavity of the rock, and stay there till he joined him.

The fisherman's wife said Adela was alive, and as well as the melancholy which preyed on her would let her be; that she had as beautiful a baby as the sun ever shone on, and amused herself for whole days in rambling over the rock; that when tired, if her boy was inclined to sleep, she would put him in a basket, which she had woven for him herself, and which she usually carried on her arm, then hang the basket and baby up in a tree, for fear the damp ground should affect him.—"She is now," continued the woman, "in one of
her

her rambling humours; you will be sure to find her, if you keep straight on by the shore. Your eyes never beheld such a cherub as the child is, but it cannot be otherwise than beautiful, for it is the picture of its mother, who has washed off the olive complexion you brought her here with."

Jacobo smiled, told the woman she should be largely rewarded, and went in search of Adela.

The friend of Jacobo had, by mistake, entered the fifth fissure of the rock instead of the fourth, which occasioned his meeting with Adela, and being so dreadfully wounded by the Brazen Mask, as related in the beginning of this work; for this friend was no other than Orlando, who was not dead when Adela was conducted to his dungeon by the Mask, but was under the power of a strong soporific. The same cruel deception was practised on Orlando, who was conducted to the apartment of Adela by

by the Mask, where she lay stretched on her mattress without the least signs of life; and Orlando was permitted to imprint, as he thought, his last kiss on her cold lips. They mourned each other as dead, though they were both living under the same roof." *Here ends the Manuscript of Orlando.*

We will now inform the reader of the sequel of the story.

Orlando stood with his arms folded, leaning against the rock, meditating on his misfortunes, when the sigh of Adela arrested his attention. She, supposing him to be a stranger, whose likeness to her lost Orlando harrowed up her soul, fled to avoid his sight. She ran up the rock, but had not proceeded far, when she met that constant destroyer of her peace, the Brazen Mask, who had just landed with a party of banditti at his heels. The recollection of her child came across her mind, when she frantically turned back with the speed of dis-
traction,

traction, and as the quickest way, leaped the precipice above Orlando, and for a moment lay senseless at his feet.

The Mask and his party pursued, but being mounted on mules, they could not leap the height, being obliged to go round the base of the rock.

Orlando and Adela had but time to exchange embraces, when the Mask and his myrmidons came in sight; and Orlando, after vainly attempting to defend her, was left covered with wounds, while Adela was once more in the hands of her old foe, the Brazen Mask.

Jacobo could not find Orlando or Adela time enough to prevent this disaster; and first met her thrown across the mule of the Mask, who had been conducted to the resort of Adela the nearest way, by the treacherous fisherman. Jacobo saw there was not a moment to lose, and putting a speaking trumpet to his mouth, which the general had given him, and which he had slung

round his neck, he called out the word Felicia ! In a moment the rock was covered, and surrounded with soldiers, who sprang up on all sides, and to try

To describe the consternation of the Mask is impossible. For the first time in his life he was caught in his own toils ; he was surrounded by numbers, seeing no way of escape.

Jacobo seeing the perilous situation of Adela, still faithful to his oath of protecting her, desired the general not to fire, but try to take the Mask alive ; as it was impossible to fire at the monster, without wounding the lady he had placed before him. Jacobo called to the Mask to surrender. —

“ Never,” he replied ; “ never, while I have life !”

Jacobo then saw his intention of forcing his way through the troops, aided by his followers.

The Mask viewed the circle round him, then turning to that side he thought the

the weakest, urged his mule forward, when Jacobo darted to the spot, and received the breast of the beast on the point of his sword. The animal reared, plunged, and threw his rider.

The Mask was stunned; Jacobo caught up Adela, put the speaking trumpet to his mouth, saying—"Felicia!" and instant carnage began; not a single follower of the Mask but was in a few minutes cut to pieces.

It had been the care of Jacobo, and González the general, to bind the Mask hand and foot, but not to take his life; and they shouted through the ranks—"The Brazen Mask is taken!" while the soldiers repeated—"The Brazen Mask is taken!"

The Mask recovering from the blow he had received, in being thrown from his mule, heard the exulting shout of the soldiers, and attempting to rise, perceived the fatal truth.

While Jacobo was busied in recover-

ing Adela, Gonzalez, with several of his officers, vainly endeavoured to take the mask off the face of the wearer—so anxious were they to behold the countenance of this extraordinary person. He calmly said to them—"Trouble not yourselves about that which you can never accomplish. It is not in the power of any man to take it off but myself. Think not to feast your eyes with contemplating my features; for if I die with the mask on, those features must be crumbled to dust ere it can leave them."

Strange as this assertion may seem, Gonzalez and his friends found it to be true; for they could perceive no joint, spring, or fastening whatever; and it was so constructed, that the wearer could both eat and drink with it on.

Jacobo, in looking over the slain, found the falsehearted fisherman and his son numbered among the dead! a fit recompence for treachery like theirs.

The news ran through the island, and the

the inhabitants flocked in crowds to the scene of action, to get a sight of the Brazen Mask, whose horrid feats were oft the subject of discourse even there. They offered to lend their assistance in keeping him in security, which Jacobo declined, saying, it was his intention to deliver the prisoner into the hands of his Spanish majesty; and gave orders for the Brazen Mask to be conveyed on board the general's ship, thinking he would be safer there than on land.

Jacobo now was distressed on account of Adela, whose terror had been too great for her strength; for the fright had brought on a milk-fever, and she remained delirious for many days—though attended by the surgeon belonging to the troops, and another living in the island.

There are few evils but some good arises out of them; for Jacobo could gain no intelligence of the child, nor of Orlando, which loss he dreaded to com-

municate to Adela—but she was not able to inquire after them. He had no doubt but the Brazen Mask and Orlando had met, and was fearful the Mask had plunged the other into the sea. Jacobo was ignorant that Adela and her husband had recognised each other, and dreaded every moment lest she should ask for her child.

Affairs stood thus, when Carlo visited the hermit who had taken care of Orlando, and the child which was found in the tree; when Carlo's first words were—"The Brazen Mask is taken! the Brazen Mask is taken!"

"The Mask, the Mask!" exclaimed Orlando.

The hermit was incapable of speaking, but with uplifted eyes and hands, fell on his knees to return silent thanks to Heaven for the miracle.

"My Adela—my wife! where is she?" demanded Orlando.

"The lady who was in the clutches of the

the Mask, when he was overpowered, is safe in the care of the person who commanded the king's troops," replied Carlo.

"Fly, oh aid me to fly to my Adela!" exclaimed Orlando.

"We will, we will all fly to her," said the hermit; "for if the Mask is taken, both Carlo and I must confront him."

The party instantly set off, Orlando forgetting his wounds, and the hermit his age—making the greatest haste the agitation they were in would permit them. Orlando hugged his boy, while Carlo supported him on one arm, and the hermit on the other.

Carlo was surprised to find his master had a companion, but the news of the Mask being taken superseded every other feeling.

On arriving at the fisherman's cot Adela was placed in, Orlando met his faithful servant coming out, and seizing
I 4 his

his hand, exclaimed—"My friend, my more than brother!"

"My dear young master," said Jacobo—"thank the saints, I behold you once more!"

He took the child out of Orlando's arms, then kissing its soft cheek, said—"He does indeed resemble his mother's beauties! If extent of power was ruled by lovely features, he ought to reign over the universe!"

The doctors ordered the child to be presented to its mother, who, after trying her milkless breast, with pouting lips vented his disappointment in a hearty cry. The distress of her infant brought Adela to her recollection, and bending over it, she let fall a tear on his beauteous face, which the doctors hailed as the prelude to her recovery. She mended fast, when Jacobo was permitted to inform her of her husband's safety. Orlando entered, and once more they were locked in each other's arms.

Adela

Adela needed no more assistance from the doctors, and Jacobo said, he now felt assured that his master and mistress were united for life, as the Brazen Mask would no longer have power to separate them.

“What then do we owe you, my friend,” said Adela, “for taking us out of his hands?”

“A debt that can never be cancelled,” said the hermit. “Believe me, I feel as if I could devote every moment of my existence in thanking the faithful fellow for the part he has acted.”

Adela’s attention was now for the first time fixed on the hermit, and when informed he had been the preserver of her husband and child, she would have knelt at his feet to thank him; but he caught her in his arms, saying, with much gaiety—“Have not I weaned the boy well? You must hire me for his future nurse, for he has so entangled my affec-

tions among his dimples, I cannot bear him out of my sight."

Jacobo now turned his attention to his prisoner, who was strongly guarded night and day on board the general's ship, six soldiers and an officer being in attendance at a time, besides general Gonzalez, who never left his captive one moment; for it was a maxim with the general, that if a commander wanted a prisoner well guarded, he should form part of the guard himself.

The future internal peace of Spain depended on the capture of this strange personage, who had preserved a sullen silence from the moment Gonzalez attempted to tear off the mask, which was so formed, as to go under the chin, and had a back piece, that went round the head; yet it was without joint, and must have been cast all at once. Where, or how he became possessed of such a thing, afforded much conjecture.

All things being arranged, the troops
were

were ready to return, exulting in the success of their mission; for there was not a soldier among them but was confident of a liberal reward.

The hermit and Carlo went in the same vessel as Orlando and Adela, with the infant, not forgetting the beautiful dove, which she took with her in her bosom, and which frequently shared the little boy's basket, when Adela used to place him in the tree. Some female servants, hired in the island, attended them.

Jacobo returned with Gonzalez, and entered the cabin where the prisoner lay, who turned to him, saying—"Misercreant! would I could crush thee below the infernal regions!"

Jacobo did not reply, nor did he wish to irritate his captive by his presence; he therefore took his station on the outside the cabin door.

The vessels exultingly sailed up the strait of Gibraltar, where the lofty dark

frowning mountains of Barbary closed the prospect to the south; in the east, Gibraltar rose proudly to the view (for this important little spot was not then in the hands of the English); to the west was the distant town of Algesiras; to the north, stood the town of Santa Roche; and behind it, rising over one another, and bounding the horizon, were the mountains of Andalusia and Granada. The vessels moored before the well-known rock of Gibraltar, which has, since that time, proudly withstood the fire of the Spaniards, who poured their shot and shell on it, night and day, for two-and-twenty months together, during the memorable siege in 1780, which was withstood by the late gallant lord Heathfield, to whose valour, as well as a few spirited officers under him, England owes the possession of Gibraltar. The father of the author was one of the officers

cers who fought under his lordship during this siege. The troops, under the direction of Gonzalez and Jacobo, having landed the Brazen Mask, sent a courier to Madrid with the news of his capture, while they proceeded with him, surrounded by soldiers, six rows deep on all sides ; for Jacobo was apprehensive a rescue might be attempted.

The hermit shunned the sight of the Mask, hastening on as fast as the delicate health of Adela, and the weak state of Orlando, would permit ; whose society he could not persuade himself to quit, not even to embrace his much-loved sovereign.

Orlando was nearly recovered of his wounds, but a languor pervaded his whole frame, owing to long confinement by the count, in the dungeon at the castle of Toledo ; from which bondage Jacobo released him, after having placed Adela in safety in the Canary Isle. He did

did not inform her, that he suspected her husband was alive, lest his enemies should murder him before he (Jacobo) could return; for in that case it would only have been raising her hopes to crush them.

Gonzalez and his men acted with the utmost caution, and proceeded through the greatest part of Andalusia without interruption, till they came to the mountains near Sierra de Morena. A pistol-shot whistled past the party from an unseen hand; a volley was poured on the troops from the same quarter, which wounded several of the soldiers, and in an instant a strong party of brigands rushed upon them from the mountains with the utmost impetuosity. Gonzalez received them coolly, and then charged upon them. The brigands retaliated, wounding more of the soldiers. Gonzalez returned the salute, when many of the enemy fell; the rest became enraged, and led on by a person who acted

as

as chief, fought desperately. The battle was obstinate and bloody, but still Gonzalez kept his prisoner surrounded by his soldiers. The chief of the bravoes attempted to cut his way through the guards, and bear off the Mask, fighting with the utmost skill, though covered with wounds.

"By old Mars," said Gonzalez to an officer who stood near him, "I would give my all for a regiment of such intrepid fellows as that! fighting seems his glory!"

Gonzalez gave the word, and another heavy charge from the troops covered the assailants with smoke and wounds; when the man whom the general had just admired, fell.

"Save him," said Gonzalez; "such valour as his must not die, though in an enemy."

The brigands, seeing they had lost their chief, fled, leaving their wounded to the mercy of the enemy, and sheltered

tered themselves behind the mountains.

Gonzalez and an officer sprang to the assistance of the marauder chief, lifting off several bodies that had fallen on him; but to the disappointment of the general, the brave spirit he wished to save seemed to have flitted from beneath his friendly hand.—“Poor fellow,” ejaculated Gonzalez, “I would thy wounds had been fewer, that I might have conversed with thy dauntless soul; for Mars never owned a bolder son!”

The officer thought he perceived a faint pulsation near the heart; and the surgeon, after long efforts, succeeded in restoring animation; and having dressed the wounds of the chief, proceeded to examine the soldiers, several of whom were wounded, but not seriously. He then turned his attention to the enemy; fifteen of them were slain, and three severely hurt. One of the three begged to be dispatched immediately, refusing all assistance to save him; and it was by
absolute

absolute force that his wounds were dressed, it being necessary to tie him down during the operation, and afterwards to confine his arms, lest he should tear off the bandages. This person was supposed to be of some consequence, and was guarded night and day, to prevent him destroying himself.

A reinforcement arrived from Madrid, which enabled Gonzalez to travel with more security, always keeping the Brazen Mask in the centre of the soldiers.

The three brigands were mounted on mules, not being dangerously wounded, their chief being carried on a litter. In this manner the whole party travelled slowly on, and arrived in safety in the environs of Madrid.

Gonzalez did not enter the capital till night, being fearful that curiosity would collect immense crowds, whenever the news should be spread that the Brazen Mask had entered the city.

The general commanded the party to
proceed

proceed up the avenue which led to the gate of the Inquisition.

The Mask, who had not spoken more than once since he was made a prisoner (for he maintained an entire silence even during the fight near Sierra de Morena), no sooner beheld the Inquisition, than he desired to speak with the general alone.

Gonzalez stepped aside with him, for neither of these persons ever knew what fear was.

"Is it your intention," demanded the Mask, "to place me in yonder prison?"

"Such are my instructions," replied the general.

"Act up to them, if you think proper," returned the Mask; "but you may tell the king, if I enter that place, my secret shall die with me! It is not that I fear death in any shape, but you may inform his majesty, the blood which fills my veins is not inferior to his crown;

and I will stand in his hand

and I will not tamely submit for it to be spilt in a prison!"

Gonzalez paused, then said—"As the Escorial was near, he would send to know his majesty's pleasure."

"Do so," replied the Mask; "your numbers are sufficient to guard one person, though he is the Brazen Mask himself!"

A messenger was dispatched to the palace, and such was the importance of the capture of this person, that the noblemen at court did not hesitate to disturb the king, who was retired to rest, informing him of the message of the Mask.

"We will indulge him in this caprice," said Ferdinand, smiling; "and lest we should hurt his dignity, he shall share our palace."

The messenger returned with orders for Gonzalez to conduct his prisoner to the Escorial, and leave the brigands, with their chief, in the Inquisition, with

with directions for them to be taken care of.

Gonzalez recommended the chief in strong terms to the officer who received him at the gate, who promised he should have every requisite attention.

The Brazen Mask was lodged in an apartment of the Escorial, when all the inhabitants of the palace were on the alert; for many of them affirmed the Mask had power to thrust himself through a stone wall, or to force open the strongest iron doors without implements.

On the following morning, an inquisitor was ordered to attend at the palace, to interrogate the prisoner, besides a familiar to take down his depositions.

The Mask was conducted into the room where the judge was, besides several noblemen belonging to the palace, with the king, who was seated on one side of the room behind a screen, with his old companion, doctor Fernandez; for

for his majesty wished to hear the defence of the prisoner, but chose to be a silent observer.

The Brazen Mask walked firmly up to the table where the judge was seated, and folding his arms, as if he disdained all around him, awaited the interrogations of the inquisitor.

The judge asked his name.

The prisoner gave no answer.

The inquisitor repeated the question.

The Mask remained silent.

Promises, rewards, threats were used, and were alike unavailing; no reply to the question could be obtained from the prisoner.

The inquisitor felt piqued at his obstinacy, and exclaimed—"Lead him to the rack, and there force an answer from him."

"Lead on!" vociferated the Mask—"to the rack instantly, and try your skill. If one torture will not do, try another,

another, till you are convinced no suffering will force the secret from me!"

"Villain!" said the inquisitor.

"Hold!" exclaimed the Mask; "not a greater villain than he, who coolly condemned Vedova to die on the wheel, knowing him to be innocent, for the value of a handful of paltry gold, which I have ever despised!"

"In the name of wonder, who are you?" demanded the inquisitor.

All present expressed their astonishment, as they eagerly rose up, while the guilty judge sank back pale and speechless in his chair.

The king alone seemed the only collected person present, and stepping from his concealment, said to the Mask—"Prove your accusation to be true, and that unjust judge shall die the same death as the innocent man whom he condemned."

"I will prove it," replied the Mask; "your people have taken a prisoner among
among

among those who tried to rescue me, who knows more of this transaction than I do."

"Seize the unjust judge," said the king to his guards, "and convey him to one of the dungeons of the Inquisition, where he has too long presided with unlimited sway!"

The order was instantly obeyed, and the inquisitor, whose knees knocked together, being unable to walk, was quickly carried to his place of confinement.

The king then seated himself in the chair which the inquisitor had just quitted, and addressing the Mask, demanded his name.

"It is no uncommon name," said the Mask; "it is a name that many of the sons of Spain are called by; and when you have heard it, you will wish your ear had not been blasted with the sound."

"This evasion is useless," the king observed; "you are completely in our power,

power, therefore say at once who you are?"

"That should be whispered in the king's ear only," replied the prisoner; "did Ferdinand respect himself, he would wish the secret buried in oblivion."

"Strange man!" ejaculated the king. "I will give you four-and-twenty hours to reflect, whether it will be better to avow yourself, and ensure our clemency, or to resist, and meet death instantly."

"Death!" said the Mask; "I smile at it."

"Bear the prisoner to his apartment," said the king.

The guards formed a line on each side of the Mask, who walked out with the same firmness he had entered, to the no small disappointment of the nobles and officers present, whose curiosity still remained unsatisfied.

In a few hours, the hermit, with his friends, arrived at the palace, and were
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immediately introduced to his majesty, who folded Orlando in his arms, saying—“Welcome, son of my adoption, preserver of my life—welcome to the heart of your king!”

Orlando presented Adela, whose trembling modesty did but increase her charms; and Ferdinand, taking her hand to prevent her kneeling, said—“As the wife of my adopted son, thou art thrice welcome to the court of Spain, lady; look upon me as an aged parent, whose grey hairs will shelter thy retiring beauties.” His majesty turned to Orlando, and with an arch smile observed—“This then is the lady, young man, about whom you lost your senses? Faith! I am not much surprised, for I can scarcely look on her myself and be rational! No wonder the beauties of our court could not please your taste, while this star so far outshone them all.”

Orlando bowed, and taking his infant

from an attendant, placed him in the arms of the king. "—

"This is a young robber," his majesty exclaimed; "he has stolen some of his mother's charms; yet it is not possible they can be missed.—Has the cherub been baptized?"

Orlando answered the infant had been born under such circumstances as not yet to admit of the ceremony.

"Then I must be his sponsor," said his majesty, imprinting a kiss on its dimpled cheek. The boy repaid him with a smile so peculiar to infancy; when the king added—"His name be Ferdinand."

"Just such a cherub did I lose!" ejaculated a voice from the farther end of the room.

The attention of every one was directed to the spot where the hermit stood, leaning on the arm of doctor Fernandez, who had recognised each other; and coming forward, the hermit, bow-
ing,

ing, attempted to kneel, which the king prevented, saying—"Old man, forbear, thine age forbids it." The feelings of the hermit prevented him speaking, when his majesty, turning to the doctor, asked—"What is the wish of this venerable person?"

"My beloved sovereign," ejaculated the hermit—

"That voice," said the king, "is the voice of my friend, of my kinsman."

The feelings of his majesty and the hermit were only fit for privacy; and Ferdinand led his much-valued friend into his closet, where they remained many hours.

"In the evening the king gave audience to Gonzalez and Jacobo, whom he highly applauded for their conduct respecting their prisoner, and asked the latter what had induced him to deliver the Brazen Mask into the hands of government?"

"A vow," replied Jacobo: "he

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sheathed his sword in the bosom of innocence, and I swore to avenge her death. Long I meditated the way in which my vengeance should alight on him, and at last resolved to benefit my country at the same time, and deliver him up to justice."

"Then you know him, of course?" demanded his majesty.

"Too fatally I do," answered Jacobo.

"Can you swear to him?" asked the king.

"I can swear him to be the person I mean," Jacobo replied. "Besides, don't Orlando know more of the Mask than I do, having seen him at various times; and his opinion corresponds with mine."

"We must detain you here," said the king, "till this business is settled; and then depend upon it you shall not go unrewarded, for the state cannot sufficiently recompense you."

"I seek for none," Jacobo answered; "though I feel your majesty's generous intentions,

intentions, yet I must decline them, being incapable of enjoying any thing this world contains."

The king replied, he hoped that time would alter his opinion; and having ordered Jacobo should be treated as a person deserving esteem, sought Orlando, with whom he had a long conversation, till he had no doubts remaining, with respect to identifying the wearer of the brazen mask.

Gustavus hearing the Mask was taken, repaired to the Escorial with Elvira and Annette, thinking their testimony might not be refused, whom he had sheltered in a convent ever since they were separated from Orlando and Adela in the forest by Leolfo.

Gustavus inquired if Orlando was in the palace, and hearing he was, desired to be introduced to him, when it was thought necessary to apprize Adela of the arrival of her mother, who flew to her embrace, and once more shed tears

of filial affection on her bosom. Annette was next welcomed ; and Gustavus was loaded with gratitude for sheltering Elvira and her faithful attendant.

If any one had witnessed the wild effusions of this affectionate family, they must have set them all down for lunatics ; for while Adela was giving vent to the exquisite feelings of her heart, Orlando had ran to fetch his boy, and hastily entering the room, placed him in Elvira's arms, who did not know till that moment she was a grandmother.

Elvira pressed the innocent to her bosom, bathing it with her tears ; while Annette begged to become his nurse ; but the good old hermit coming in at the moment, said he should dispute that office with her, for having had the honour of weaning the child, he should always think himself entitled to the head place in the nursery. Each repaid the good-nature of the old man with a smile ; and this happy group felt as if
they

they had climbed to the summit of felicity.

Elvira desired to see Jacobo, who Orlando always treated as a brother, and immediately fetched him to witness his happiness.

Elvira took his hand, saying—"My faithful Jacobo, you must henceforth be considered the sincerest friend of my family; your attachment to my son and daughter claims my lasting gratitude. You must consent to reside with us, not as an attendant, but as a branch of our family."

Jacobo bowed low, but shook his head.

The four-and-twenty hours, being elapsed, and the king having advised with his counsellors, ordered the Brazen Mask to be brought into the throne-room, where his majesty was seated, surrounded by his officers of state, legal advisers, and guards.

On the right hand of the king were seated the hermit and Orlando; on the

left were Jacobo and Gustavus. These four persons were certain they had seen enough of the Brazen Mask to swear to him.

The prisoner entered with the same undaunted step as before, and folding his arms, stood unmoved by all around him.

A judge was selected for this occasion, but not from the Inquisition, who asked the prisoner his name; but received no answer.

The question was put in various ways, but alike unsuccessfully; and the counsellors exerted their utmost ingenuity, yet obtained no reply.

The judge desired the four witnesses to identify the prisoner.

Orlando, the hermit, Gustavus, and Jacobo, left their seats, going opposite the judge, and separately swore that the prisoner was Leolfo, count of Guadaluaxara.

"I believe

"I believe the witnesses are right," the king remarked.

"They are perjured!" exclaimed the Mask.

"Why do not you convince us of your assertion, and tell us who you are?" demanded the king.

"Because I do not choose to satisfy the curiosity of hirelings," answered the Mask. "When Ferdinand asks a question, which I do not deem improper, I shall answer; but there is no other man in the kingdom shall dare to interrogate me, and receive an answer."

"Well then," said the king, "it seems I must be your judge myself."

"Of what am I accused?" said the Mask.

"Your crimes are various," Ferdinand answered; "but my counsellors have for the present selected only one. They will read your accusation to you."

One of the counsellors read as follows:—

"You, Leolfo, count of Guadalupe, did, on the night of the nineteenth of last August but one, attempt the life of Ferdinand, our most gracious sovereign, by getting into the palace clandestinely, and into the apartment of his majesty, where, with the intent of assassinating the king, you did lift a certain dagger against him, aiming a blow at his heart, and would have effected your murderous intent, had not a young man of the name Orlando struck the said dagger out of your hand."

"All which is false," observed the Mask.

"We have witnesses to prove the truth of it," the counsellor said, "and shall try you accordingly."

"Proceed your own way," said the Mask.

Orlando gave in his deposition, which was corroborated by Osberto, the page, who was the person that sprang to the assistance of Orlando, on hearing the explosion

explosion of the pistol with which he shot the assassin in the arm, and swore that he saw the said Leolfo writhing beneath the wound, and that the prisoner was one and the same person.

Several of the guards who were on duty in the palace on that memorable night of the nineteenth of August offered to affirm, that they saw the prisoner force himself through an iron door, and disappear through an opposite stone wall, which nothing of substance could have done, therefore they supposed him to be a spirit.

The superstitious testimony of the guards was not thought rational enough to be noted down, and the prisoner was called on for his defence.

"Who is it asks me to defend such a charge as this?" demanded the Mask.

"I am honoured with a name I have no title to," replied the prisoner, "and accused of a crime I never committed!"

"You must prove yourself innocent,

“or we shall condemn I you,” said the judge. “Hold thy peace, reptile!” exclaimed the prisoner, scornfully. Then addressing the king, he added—“I know my time is come, but I will not suffer for that which I have not been guilty of. I always hated you, Ferdinand, but I did not at that time lift my hand against you. I have much to communicate, which is more fit for your private ear than to be avowed in public. Shall I proceed, or do you choose to save your own disgrace, and have a private audience with me?”

The king replied there was no action of his life but he was willing to be unfolded to the public, and desired the prisoner to proceed, which he did, in the following manner. His deposition was taken down, which was always afterwards called *The Confession of the Brazen Mask.* “You will acknowledge, Ferdinand, that

that whatever I choose to reveal is optional ; for no force can extort a syllable from me, nor can any one inform you who I am, nor can you ever see my face unless I choose you shall. To make you understand some circumstances, I shall refer to transactions many years back, and avow the motive of my conduct.

"It was *ambition*, which was the secret spring of all my actions. Glorious passion! Angels themselves have given way to it! I felt my littleness, while there was one man above me, and determined to remove that man, who was no other than yourself, Ferdinand?"

A murmur of indignation ran through the assembly; the guards laid their hands on their swords, but the king motioned for silence, and the prisoner proceeded.

"I sought unlimited power, and determined to possess the throne. But there was another bar to my hopes, which

which I found necessary to remove before yourself. You had a relation, the duke of Andalusia, whose family were heirs to the crown of Spain. The brave old duke fell, covered with the arrows of the Africans, where he was placed in the forefront of the battle, bound hand and foot, to please the caprice of a woman. The duke Acasto was accused of treachery, and the king of Spain was too imbecile a monarch to inquire into the merits of the case; but suffered his relation to be slain by the enemy, because a woman said he was guilty!"

The hermit covered his face with his hands to stifle his grief, and the king rose up, saying—"In the name of God, who are you?"

"Thine enemy," the prisoner replied. "But to return to my narrative.—I had a commission in one of the regiments which was sent to bring the young Acasto, son of the duke, by force from the shores of Africa, where he was shel-

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tered in the hearts of the natives, and in the arms of beauty, for he had privately married the most lovely creature I ever beheld—Kora, sister to Alvaro, an African chief. The first time I buried my poniard in the breast of any one, was in this same Alvaro; for I attempted the life of the duke in a wood, through which he was travelling, when Alvaro threw himself between us, and received the wound instead of the duke. My second attempt was again on Alvaro, for his bravery and activity were such, I perceived it would be difficult to extirpate the family of Acasto, while the African was near them. I knew the castle of Andalusia well, and entered it through a subterraneous avenue, which terminated beneath the rock of Gibraltar. I plunged my dagger into his side while he was sleeping, when he instantly sprang from his couch, and though unarmed, wrestled with uncommon dexterity. Notwithstanding I gave him

him many wounds, and left him for dead, he afterwards recovered.

My next essay was on the coast of Africa, whither I went with the Spanish army. The African chief fell before an arrow whistled from the enemy; but when the blacks saw their idolized Alvaro gone, they fell upon us with unparalleled fury. The quick havock they made among our troops was incredible; for our men and officers dropped beneath their arrows by thousands.

"I sought the young Acasto every where, being determined to fight with no other. The battle became so fierce, that foe drew nearer to foe, and crowds of arrows darkened the air, when I heard a piercing shriek from amidst the enemy, and darted to the spot from whence the sound issued, where I beheld him I had sought so long. Acasto was supporting a female, and trying to shield her from the arrows. Whatever I had witnessed of all that was beautiful in woman,

woman, seemed centred in this young creature. This then, thought I, must be the fascinating Kora. She probably might have escaped my dagger's point, had I not at that moment perceived an infant in her arms. Ambition whispered to me—Thou canst not mount the throne, while one of the house of Andalusia lives. I reached over the shoulder of Acasto, and plunged my dagger to the heart of Kora.”

The Mask was here interrupted by the agony of the hermit, which amounted to convulsions. Orlando knew the cause of his anguish, and helped to support him. In a little time he was brought to himself, and the king desired the Mask to proceed, who continued—“The arms of Kora dropped, and let fall the boy.”

The hermit rose up, clasped his hands together, saying—“If you ever knew what mercy was, say, oh say, what became of that child!”

“Be

“Be calm, and you shall know,” replied the prisoner.—“I took the child up, and made the best of my way to the shore with him. Our army was cut to pieces, for there were but nine persons besides myself who returned to tell the tale. Report affirmed that I was among the slain, which I did not choose to contradict; for the vessel in which I returned with a few others, after weathering for hours the heaviest storm that was ever witnessed, sank. The boat was filled with the crew; but as if fate had ordained that none but myself should escape, the moment I leaped in, the boat upset, when all, save I and the infant, perished. I hid the child in obscurity many years, being resolved to bring him up as my own; and if I did not ascend the throne myself, to place him on it. I had the boy formally christened and registered at a small village in Galicia,

licia, as the son of Acasto—and the persons present thought that to be my own name. Many years passed without any stir being made respecting him, when suddenly the child was publicly described, and large rewards offered for those who should give information of him, dead or alive. This obliged me to guard him with double diligence, and remove him.

“I was generally a favourite with the ladies, having actually married two, who were both living at the same time; and had a son born by one, about the same time that Acasto’s was. My own son died, which was instantly removed from its mother, for I never gave way much to the feelings of women; and when I brought the child of Acasto home, my wife did not know whether it was her own son or not; sometimes fancying that her own infant was not actually dead; for I had taken the precaution of calling them both by the same name.

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"I should have told you, that as soon as I meditated to possess myself of the throne, I secreted immense wealth, and engaged a band of brave fellows, who were ripe for any thing, provided they were well paid: they first were hired by me, when I attacked the duke of Andalusia in the forest.

"I had previously procured the mask you now see me wear, which I always put on on desperate occasions; so that no one who accompanied me on these emergencies ever saw my face, which has procured me the name of the Brazen Mask.

"I drew the model of it myself, and after much difficulty found a man to cast it, promising him forty doubloons for his job, provided he would not let any one know of it, and suffer me to be present the whole time he was making it. I gave him half the money before he began. The poor fool stuck to his agreement, and the moment I saw

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it completed, according to my wish, I shot him dead, and left that part of the country.

“There never was but one person that knew who I was, and that person I found could not keep the secret, being a woman whom I kept, when I removed her to the robbers’ cave; but even there I was not secure against her tongue, and in a moment of rage, when she was on the point of betraying me, I cut it out.

“By this woman I had a son, who was born in the robbers’ cave. Strange to say, though surrounded by vice, his principles of rectitude and honour would grace a mitre. The captain of the robbers died, and my son was, though young, chosen his successor. The band was fresh organized by their new captain, when they left off robbing, being solely employed by, and devoted to me; for I had riches sufficient to support them all. When I have ordered them

out on an expedition, the rectitude of my son would recoil at a dishonourable action; yet his sense of duty to me was such, that he could not bring himself to disobey.

“He does not know my name, nor has he ever seen my face. My reason for not fixing on him as my successor, instead of the son of Acasto, was that he was too old to pass for my legitimate offspring, being born many years before I married either of my wives, with whom I had immense fortunes. My first wife, with whom I had no children, died shortly after our defeat in Africa.

“I have a daughter, whose beauty renders her the flower of Spain; a wife, whose amiability has supported her against the natural moroseness of my disposition; a fortune still immense; yet all these availed me nothing, so long as Ferdinand remained on the throne. Ambition was left ungratified—for what were riches without power? I have a
capacious

capacious mind, which knows how to command, but not to obey.

“I did not aim a blow at the life of you, Ferdinand, first with my own hand, but sent an emissary, who failed through pusillanimity. I sent a second, who could not do the deed from accident. Whatever plans I formed against the life of Ferdinand, were rendered abortive by some event I could not foresee. The last attack promised success, for the person entered the Escorial through a secret communication that led from the Inquisition.

“I had free access into that abode of iniquity, through means of gold; and could even obtain permission to officiate as judge, in the place of that unjust inquisitor who condemned Vedova. I was the person who so frequently examined the duke of Andalusia, while he was confined there by order of the queen; and took delight in visiting his

dungeon

capacious

dungeon in my brazen mask, to feast my eyes with his miseries.

“There were several apartments in the palace which were not used, and I procured a workman, who I always led to the spot blindfold, to make a trap in the middle of the floor of one of these chambers, which was over the passage that led from the Inquisition; but it was so constructed, that no one could make use of it, unless I instructed him. When the man had made it complete, I stabbed him to the heart—always remembering that dead men tell no tales. Many years after, I found this room was inhabited by a young man, newly arrived at court; and knowing the business which took him there, I one night visited him, for I had previously determined my son should do the deed; but fearing he might lose his life in the attempt, and finding the young man who occupied this chamber sent to court for the same purpose, I presented him with
a certain

a certain dagger he left behind him in the robbers' cave. Contrary to my expectation, he aimed a blow at my own breast, when I instantly made use of the trap, and disappeared."

Here Orlando started up, saying—"The light begins to break upon me!—In the name of Heaven——"

"Peace," interrupted the Mask; "remember I answer no questions."

Orlando resumed his seat, in evident disappointment.

The Mask continued—"I see, Ferdinand, you are anxious to interrogate me respecting that same dagger. All I shall say on the subject is, that it was given you by a friend you have long mourned; not that he supposed you would ever use it; but he presented it to you merely for the value of it; and I, thinking it would suit my purpose better than yours, stole it from you, determining you should be stabbed with your own weapon.

"I will now satisfy the curiosity of all present.—Orlando, look at the venerable figure of the hermit, and behold your father!"

The hermit fell back in an hysteric laugh; Orlando threw himself at the old man's feet, suffocated with joy; the king trembled with delight; and the whole court rose in consternation.

All was tumult; nothing like order could be restored, and his majesty embraced Orlando, then the hermit, saying—"Welcome intelligence! my beloved my only relatives!"

The old man recovering, folding his arms round Orlando, said—"Son of my Kora!"

"Father!" exclaimed Orlando; but neither father nor son could articulate more—for joy impeded their utterance. Many an eye present was moistened with the tear of sympathy, which none had cause to blush at.

The friend of the king, the amiable
Fernandez,

Fernandez, was not backward in expressing his warm congratulations at the welcome discovery.

The voice of the Mask at length sounded on their ears, which alone had power to restore tranquillity.

Orlando, breaking from the hermit, threw himself at the prisoner's feet, saying—"Thank you, thank you! this moment of ecstasy has made me amends for years of misery!"

"It is now requisite," replied the Mask, "that I should prove you to be what I have asserted you are: I here affirm you to be Orlando, son of Acasto, present duke of Andalusia—whose person is concealed yonder, under the garb of a hermit."

At the entreaty of the king, Acasto, who had hitherto appeared as a hermit, threw off his disguise, which consisted of a long garment, confined round his waist by a leathern belt, with a wig, consisting of a few straggling grey hairs,

and stood before the assembly as the duke of Andalusia, successor to the good old duke, who was slain on the African shore.

The Mask, addressing him, said—
“The son of Kora had a peculiar mark; describe it.”

“My lamented Kora,” replied Acasto, “was accompanied by her brother Alvaro and myself in the woods of Africa, while we chased a young tiger; and was pierced in the left shoulder, by an arrow let loose by accident from the bow of one of their African slaves. The wound was not dangerous, but the shock was still more so; for she had not till then told me I was likely to become a father; and when my son was born, he was marked with an arrow on the left shoulder.”

Orlando took off the sleeve of his dress, pointing to the arrow on his left shoulder. Again the father and son were clasped in each other's embrace,

and again they were congratulated by all present.

At the desire of Acasto, Carlo was brought in, who described the mark of Kora's child, the same as his master had done; and being shewn that on the shoulder of Orlando, was confident he could swear it to be the same.

"How happened it," said the Mask, addressing Acasto, "that when your son was publicly described, you forgot to mention this uncommon mark?"

"No doubt it was owing to the state of my mind," said the duke; "for reason had but just then began to shed her bright ray over my distracted mind, which had for nine years become a blank."

"Had it not been for this effort to find him," resumed the Mask, "I should not have removed him from the obscurity I had placed him in; but he would have lived and died as the son of the simple, but honest Mezenza."

Gustavus congratulated his friend Orlando, and the faithful Jacobo hailed his young master, as the son of the duke, with unfeigned joy.

"I will now put into your hands," said the Mask, "the register of your son's baptism." He took a paper from the lining of his hat, giving it to Acasto. The guards attempted to take the hat from the prisoner, when he said—"My further communications depend on the treatment I meet with; take my hat from me, and I am dumb."

The king desired the guards to desist, and the Mask continued—"My next attempt on the life of Ferdinand was in the gardens of the Escorial, where he was walking with his young favourite, Orlando. I entered the gardens, and concealed myself in a tree, by the side of a walk the king frequented. On seeing him approach, I suddenly dropped from the tree, aiming a blow at his breast; which Orlando perceiving,

threw

threw himself between us, and received it in his right arm. I fled into the palace, and dropped through my old trap, leaving the inhabitants of the castle in the utmost consternation. Some time after this I was nearly discovered, for I was one day passing along the principal corridor, when the king and his nobles came out of an apartment on the opposite side to where I was, as they were proceeding to the audience-chamber. Retreat was impossible. I crossed the gallery, passed behind a statue, which was near the door of Orlando's apartment, disappearing through the trap I had made in the middle of the floor. It seemed to me, that I had been destined to rear Orlando to cross every purpose of my life. I gave up the task of destroying Ferdinand with my own hand, and sent one who I knew to be capable of accomplishing the deed; but he was likewise defeated, by being shot in the arm by Orlando. This person was se-

cured, and ordered to be conducted to a dungeon. He was fortunately led past the chamber I have so often mentioned, and darting in, escaped through the trap, which I had previously shewn him how to use."

The king here interrupted the Mask, observing—"I do not mean to *question* you, but so many circumstances combine to make me believe you to be that same person that I still retain the idea of."

"I can convince you of your mistake," replied the Mask, "without discovering myself."

"How can that be possible?" demanded Ferdinand.

"Before I satisfy you," answered the prisoner, "inform me whether a young man lives, who was foremost in attempting my rescue?"

"The gallant fellow lives, and is out of danger, for I see him every day," said Gonzalez. "His persevering resolution won my esteem, though he was

in

in opposition to me, and I vowed to save him."

"You have my thanks, general," observed the Mask, "if the gratitude of so uncommon a character as I am is not rejected by you. I cannot convince the king of one particular point, unless the persons you took prisoners may be introduced."

His majesty gave consent, when one of the four persons was led in. Orlando sprang from his seat, throwing himself into the arms of the man, exclaiming—
"My friend, my more than brother!"

The stranger replied—"The sight of Orlando will help to support me under these trying circumstances."

The surprise of the king and his adherents at the conduct of Orlando was great; but their attention was again directed to the stranger, who breaking from Orlando, went and threw himself at the feet of the Mask, saying—"Do I behold you thus?"

"It is even so, my son," answered the Mask; "and I glory in thy last effort to release thy father! Valour itself could do no more, and I am satisfied you acted as became the son of the Brazen Mask." Then turning to Gonzalez—"I again thank you, general, for the life of my son."

"By old Mars," said the general, "I should glory in such a son too!"

Orlando took the hand of the stranger, and drawing him aside, whispered a few words in his ear. The king looked displeased, as Orlando proceeded up to the throne, leading the prisoner, whose graceful mien attracted all eyes; while every one confessed, his form was the most perfect they had ever seen. Orlando, with his new-found friend, knelt at the foot of the throne, while the former said—"Your majesty's displeasure will soon cease, when I inform you this stranger is the firmest friend I ever had. Allow

me to bear, my son," exclaimed the

Mask—

and

me to bespeak your compassion for him, for he is Regolio!" "Regolio!" exclaimed his majesty; "I would thou hadst a better father, unfortunate, brave young man! For the services you have rendered Orlando, we pardon your attempt to release your parent."

"I will endeavour to appreciate your majesty's clemency," said Regolio; "and emboldened by it, will venture to make one request. Let me die instead of my father—suffer my life to go for his; oh, let my blood wash out his crimes!"

"I am sorry," replied the king, "you did not ask something that was not derogatory to my honour to grant."

"Oh," said Regolio, with earnestness, "your majesty must have forgotten what it is to be a son; or your father dying while you was young, you never knew the strong ties of filial affection. Spare my father, and accept my life for his!"

"Forbear, my son," exclaimed the

Mask—"I scorn to live disgraced; for being once taken, I considered my time was come, and have informed Ferdinand of circumstances I would not have made known, did I wish to live." *The Mask.*

Regolio ceased to importune, and the king, commanding him to rise, asked if he had ever seen his father's face?

"Never," answered Regolio; "I never knew him but in the character of the Brazen Mask."

"And yet," rejoined the king, "you venerate him in that character?"

"Your majesty misunderstands me," said Regolio; "I do not approve his misdeeds, but I venerate him as my father."

"I would all fathers had sons like you," said Ferdinand.

Doctor Fernandez whispered to the king, that Regolio should be permitted to have a seat, on account of his late sufferings; which the young man modestly declined.

destly refused, saying he could not sit while his father stood.

Two more of the prisoners were then ushered in.

The Mask said, "Neither of these fellows have done any thing against the state, save trying to rescue me. I thought general Gonzalez captured another prisoner?"

"I did," replied the general; "he is coming."

In a few minutes a person entered, when the king, Fernandez, the page, Orlando, Gustavus, and Jacobo, uttered an exclamation of horror; for the person was Leolfo, count of Guadalupe.

"You find yourselves mistaken," said the Mask.

"We do indeed," they all answered, "and are willing to recall our assertion that you was Leolfo."

Let this circumstance teach you not to judge by appearances; for you might have condemned one who had not com-
mitted

mitted the crime, and have let the actual assassin escape," observed the Mask. "I do not wonder you were deceived, for in person, Leolfo so nearly represents me, that it is difficult to distinguish us; which is one reason I sought his friendship. In order to heighten the deception, I persuaded him to wear a long black cloak, and a large plume of black feathers in his hat. We will, to convince you, put on our hats."

They did so, and enveloping themselves in their cloaks, stood side by side; when every one acknowledged, if Leolfo had on a brazen mask as well as the other, it would have been impossible to distinguish them, the similarity was so great: they were of equal stature and of equal bulk.

Many of the bystanders anxiously wished to know if the features of the Mask bore as strong a likeness to the cadaverous countenance of Leolfo as his person did.

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The king said he hoped, from that hour, no person in his dominions would be circumstantially condemned.

The Mask and Leolfo still greeted each other as firm friends.

Leolfo was placed at a distance from his old colleague, and interrogated as to his knowledge of the Mask; but he persisted in his entire ignorance as to who he was.

"He speaks truly," interrupted the Mask; "for not a being lives who knows who I am; I laid my plans too cautiously to trust even my friend and colleague. I have frequently been taken for the count, and he as often has been honoured with the title of the Brazen Mask. I will now substantiate my charge against the inquisitor who condemned Vedova."

Leolfo started, saying—"What occasion is there for that?"

"I did not choose to be interrogated

The

by such a miscreant as he is, and have exposed him," the Mask replied.

"How did you know any thing about the business?" Leolfo demanded.

"I personated one of the inquisitors who was to take down the depositions," answered the Mask; "for Vedova's judge would suffer me to do any thing for gold."

The inquisitor was brought in, and hearing the circumstances relative to Vedova's death repeated, confessed the facts proved against him, and was condemned by the head inquisitor, who was then present, to be broken on the wheel, being the same death the unjust judge had, for the sake of gold, condemned the innocent Vedova to die. The culprit was ordered to be led to execution immediately; but his majesty granted him twelve hours to prepare for the awful change.

Gustavus seemed to have recalled all the horrors of the scene of Vedova's trial

trial to his mind; but thanked Heaven his father-in-law's death was so soon avenged.

The Mask drew the attention of the court from commiserating Vedova's sufferings, by saying to the king—"For the last time, Ferdinand, I stoop to ask a private audience."

"Which I cannot stoop to grant," replied his majesty.

"Your obstinacy alight on your own head!" returned the prisoner.

The mask was off his face in a moment; the king dropped senseless off the throne; Acasto covered his eyes with his hands; Fernandez seemed incapable of attending to his royal patient; Regolio knelt at the prisoner's feet; Orlando and Jacobo uttered an exclamation; the rest of the bystanders rushed to gaze on features they had so ardently longed to see, but they there beheld no marks of murderous intent, no lineaments could be traced that corresponded with

with the dark actions of his life; for had even Lavater lived then, and been present, he would have found a countenance that would have baffled his deepest studies. The countenance of the prisoner was handsome beyond what is generally called so, and his dark speaking eye bid defiance to all around him.

The king being recovered, exclaimed in agony—"Sebastian! Sebastian!"

"Yes," said the prisoner, "with pride I acknowledge I *am* Sebastian, kinsman to the pusillanimous Ferdinand!"

"Oh, horror!" interrupted the king; thou art indeed my relative!"

"This exposure you may thank yourself for," said Sebastian; "this I would have spared you, which is the only clement act I ever felt inclined to shew the faint-hearted king of Spain."

"Cease this bitterness!" observed his majesty. "Did I ever injure you?"

"You never had courage to do it," answered Sebastian, "*intentionally*; but

as long as you lived to reign, I considered you lived to injure me; for depend upon it, thy weak powers were never meant to govern. In the same light I viewed the family of Andalusia, because they, being more nearly allied to you than myself, stood between me and the throne; for they were related to you by your father's side, while I could claim affinity to you only by the side of your mother.

The dagger I before alluded to was given to you by myself; and you will recollect, there is in the stiletto, contained in the handle of the dagger, the letter S. set in diamonds, which is the initial of my name.

I see by the countenance of Orlando he would ask some questions if he *dare*; and as I have left more circumstances untold, I will resume my narrative.

The present duke of Andalusia cannot have forgotten the thralldom he escaped

caped from on the morning appointed for his marriage with Isidora, niece to the queen Isabella, when I unexpectedly became the husband of the lady instead of him. Ambition led me to solicit the hand of Isidora; but her caprice, pride, and insolence, were so great, that I did not know she would have me, till the priest had began the ceremony to unite her with Acasto, when she interrupted the monk, and in the face of the whole court of Spain, declared in my favour; and Acasto left me fettered with the greatest tyrant that ever wore the form of woman; but ambition told me this was one great step towards the throne. I never pleased Isidora after marriage but once, which was when I found out Acasto's union with Kora, and proposed to force him from the arms of his wife, and bring him to the Inquisition.

"The queen joined our plans; while you, Ferdinand, was, as usual, where
your

your wife bore sway, nothing but a cipher. The brave old duke was seized, supposing Acasto would immediately follow; but we were mistaken, for he did not appear to release his father; and it was the diabolical proposal of Isidora that the duke should be sent with a large army to Africa, that he should be bound hand and foot, then placed in the forefront of the battle, that he might die by the arrows which defended his son! I will do you the justice to say, Ferdinand, you resisted this plan, with all the resolution you *dare* assume; but you had two tygresses to deal with, who soon extinguished the spark of spirit you had lighted in favour of the duke. I need not recapitulate the particulars of that battle, except that Isidora charged me to bring Acasto to Madrid, dead or alive.

"I informed you I had no children by my first wife, who was this same Isidora. I was but little at court, and
spent

spent much of my time at a distant castle I had purchased, unknown to any of the royal family, where I solaced myself by a second marriage with a beautiful girl, who was my ward, which marriage I had registered, unknown to her, in my real name; but as passion soon satiates, I was not long in love with my young wife, and locked her up, as I thought, for the remainder of her days, sometimes visiting her, as caprice led me. She bore my tyranny without complaint, and presented me with a son, who soon died. Shortly after this she found I had another wife, owing to a babbling woman, who had been by me placed over her as duenna, and had nearly exposed my marriage with Isidora, when I and my man entered, and dispatched her with our stilettoes ere she could finish all her information. My youngest wife, on hearing this, contrived to make her escape; I pursued her with some of my braves, and

and took her to the robbers' cave, where she remained till the death of Isidora. While she was here, a man threatened to expose me, owing to an affray among the robbers; but before he could finish the sentence, I silenced him for ever; not that I believed him to be in possession of my secret, but I could not brook a threat from any one.

"I suffered my imprisoned wife to escape from the cave, when she was taken by Leolfo, who, finding her strong in virtue, being order to be revenged against her, made me a present of my own wife. Contrary to her expectation, I soothed instead of reproached her—assured her of the death of my first wife—forged a register of the funeral—procured a coffin filled with stones, which I told her were the remains of her rival, and they were placed in my family vault. The delicate scruples of my young wife were hushed, and, as she really loved me, all my misdeeds

were

were easily forgotten. Though Isidora was actually dead, I dared not attempt to notice it at court; for it was at this time believed I was slain on the African coast.

“ My present wife was likely to become a mother a second time, and I still hoped for a son and heir; but, to my utter vexation, she presented me with a shabby girl. I was so exasperated, that I swore never to see the child, and kept to my determination, till it was dropped into my arms from a window above me by its nurse, who accidentally let it fall. Of all the beings I had ever beheld, I never saw but one equal to this little creature for beauty, and that one was Kora. The obduracy of my nature relaxed before her infantine charms, and for a moment I felt the father rush into my heart, as I still gazed upon its matchless features. I took my child to its mother, and placing it in her arms, consented it should call me—father! This unexpected

unexpected condescension almost overpowered the affectionate heart of my young wife, who seemed to idolize me, for acknowledging my own child.

“Not any thing material happened in my family till I took Orlando from his hiding-place, and introduced him on the theatre of life as my son; but he was inclined to act his part so badly, as to render all my schemes abortive. The obstinate detestation with which he regarded me, seemed as if he had known he beheld his mother’s murderer! Our hatred was reciprocal; for his eyes were such an exact representation of Kora’s, as I beheld her intently gazing on her husband, when he held her in his arms, but the moment before I plunged my dagger in her breast, that I never could encounter the look of Orlando, without feeling sensations of horror.

“I have frequently determined he should live no longer; have grasped my dagger to rid myself of him; but at these times his eye would encounter

mine, my arm would fall powerless, and the deed remain undone. How often have I cursed myself for being overcome by feelings I could not account for! I had a servant, a daring man, who would not have hesitated to serve me in this instance, for he was one familiar with murder; but I could not employ him on this occasion, without leading him to suspect Orlando was not my son.

"Whatever plans I laid were always frustrated by Orlando; and I lived to see, that I had preserved the child of the detested Acasto and the murdered Kora to be my constant curse.

"There was one act of my life for which I felt some compunction. It was the murder of an innocent child of mine, of illegitimate birth, by my own hand! Though the act was accidental, still I regretted it; I had destined my daughter by my wife to be the bride of the man she shuddered at; and my other illegitimate girl, who I had by my housekeeper, feeling no such repug-

nance,

nance, assumed the dress of the destined bride, and acted her part so well, as to deceive even the bridegroom, and was actually married to my friend. On the deception being discovered, the count thought I was privy to it; words ran high—we fought—my unfortunate child rushed between us, and received both our swords in her bosom!

“As great things sometimes arise out of small ones, the unintentional death of this child led to my apprehension; for a young man of my household, who had conceived an unshaken passion for her, vowed to be revenged, and betrayed me on the island of Canary.

“But to return.—The count was now free, and still demanded his intended bride. I did all in my power to put off the match so long as he insisted; for I was too proud to be intimidated by any thing my fellow-man could threaten; and commanded him to do his utmost, promising the moment he turned against me, to sheathe my dagger in the bosom

of his wished for bride. The threat had the desired effect, for the count, who really loved my daughter, now importuned, and I yielded.

I “Again my airy castles were tumbled to the earth by Orlando. He had contrived to convey my daughter from my reach for a time, and when I regained her, I found she had united herself to this bane of my life, the son of the hated Acasto. They had found out, by some means I knew not of, that they were not brother and sister, and became man and wife. It is vain I deprecate this union, for language cannot convey my disappointment.

“The young man I mentioned had not forgotten his oath, and conveyed my daughter to the Isle of Canary, as well as her husband afterwards; whither I pursued them, and fell into the toils spread to ensnare me.

“I will now clear up the remaining mystery, by declaring my wife to be Elvira—my daughter, Adela—my man
servant,

servant, Murdico, and myself, De Torza.

“After the defeat in Africa, I was thrown on the coast of Spain by the tumultuous waves, which had sent our vessel and crew to the bottom, when I found my life had been saved by a fisherman, who had dressed a deep wound in my head, and rescued the child of Kora from the foaming billows. To this man, who was Mezenza, I gave the care of Orlando, with a heavy purse of gold—leaving that part of the country, and changed my name.

“You find Sebastian, the Brazen Mask, and De Torza, to be one and the same person; and I glory to add, they are centred in myself.

“Here I close my narrative, and close it with invoking a curse, a curse, a curse, on the house of Ferdinand!”

Sebastian ceased, the audience was thrilled with horror. Sebastian raised his left hand—Leolfo did the same; the bystanders looked on each other for an explanation; the explosion of two pis-

tols was heard at the same moment: Leolfo and Sebastian fell, weltering in their own blood—each shot by the hand of the other!

The guards raised the prisoners as soon as their consternation would permit, and found Leolfo a corpse; but Sebastian opened his eyes, saying in a low voice—"Eternity! oh, the horror of being shut out from God through all eternity!" He said no more, but expired with his eyes and mouth extended wide open, as if he beheld some terrific sight he was not prepared to meet.

It was afterwards ascertained from Regolio, that the pistols were concealed among the large plume of black feathers worn in the hat of Sebastian, which made him so loath to part with it; and it was supposed, that when Leolfo and he put on their hats, standing side by side, that Sebastian conveyed one of the pistols to the count.

The royal family felt released from their

their persecuting enemy, the Brazen Mask; and Orlando led Regolio from the contemplation of his father's corpse, conducting him into his own closet. This brave young man, having renounced his deistical principles, could not be persuaded from entering a monastery of rigid discipline, where he spent the remainder of his life in praying for the release of his father's soul (if consistent with the decrees of Omnipotence), from the everlasting punishment brought on it by that fell sin, ambition. Murdico was found slain among the bravoes who attempted to rescue the Brazen Mask—a fit recompence for one who had often shed the blood of innocence. The king rewarded all those who had aided in taking the wearer of the brazen mask; and gave the castle of Toledo, with a suitable yearly income, to Jacobo: but he, as if incapable of enjoying any thing, save the contemplation of his loss, built, in a sequestered corner

corner of the grounds, a white marble monument, with no other inscription on it than—"Felicia." Thither he removed the remains of his lamented love, spending the chief of his time within this mausoleum, with his head resting on his hand, and his arm on the coffin of Felicia. Grief had worn his once athletic form to a shadow, and being missed for several days, he was found in his accustomed spot. His arm had dropped, and he lay with his head pillowed by the ashes of his love, where he had breathed his last! His remains were interred beside those of Felicia, by father Paulo, who arrived too late to reason Jacobo out of giving way to the intensity of his grief.

At the desire of the king, Paulo went to reside at the Escorial. He once more folded his arms round the child he had lent his aid to fortify against the misfortunes of life; and found her emerged from the beautiful blossom he last saw her, into the ripened fruit, springing
from

from fortitude and resignation. In other words, he once more blessed his pupil Adela.

Elvira hailed him as her spiritual guide, and would frequently converse with him about the strange man she had so many years before given her hand to.

Paulo had been detained from witnessing the late occurrences, by attending the sick couch of his friend the abbot, who had resigned his soul to Him who gave it.

Lina was taken into the nursery of Adela, as one of the attendants of the little Ferdinand, whose chief companions were his grandfather, the duke Acasto, and the beautiful dove, which still resided with its attached mistress.

Elvira and Adela were never made acquainted with all the horrors of Sebastian's character; for at the desire of Orlando, the account was softened as much as possible.

Mezenza could not be induced to quit

quit his peaceful vineyard. Orlando settled an annuity on him, never omitting to visit Mezenza once a year, in company with his father the duke of Andalusia. The tree on which Orlando carved his name in his boyish days, is still in high preservation, surrounded by the little white paling.

Carlo resided with his master, sharing his happiness, as he had before partaken of his affliction. The duke esteemed him, as if he had been his near relative, and was never tired of telling strangers, that he had been indebted to his faithful Carlo, for sustenance and constant watching, through nine years, when he was a wandering maniac.

Orlando, taking his infant son, with the duke Acasto, went to the island of Canary, to the convent where Leonetta still lived; and that holy woman blessed the son of her departed Kora, being fully convinced of his identity, by the arrow on his left shoulder; at the same time pressing her little grandson to her heart,

heart, saying—"Now I have lived long enough! now I have but one wish, which is, that I may shortly join my husband, my Alvaro, and my Kora!"

Her prayer was granted; for in a few days this pious nun breathed her last—when her pure spirit winged its way to the realms of bliss, to meet those she had so dearly loved on earth.

The faithful Annette resided constantly with her mistress, preparing her pure spirit to meet Regolio in the skies, as she could not consent to a union with him on earth; being determined she would never rear a family to be reproached with the black crimes of Murdico.

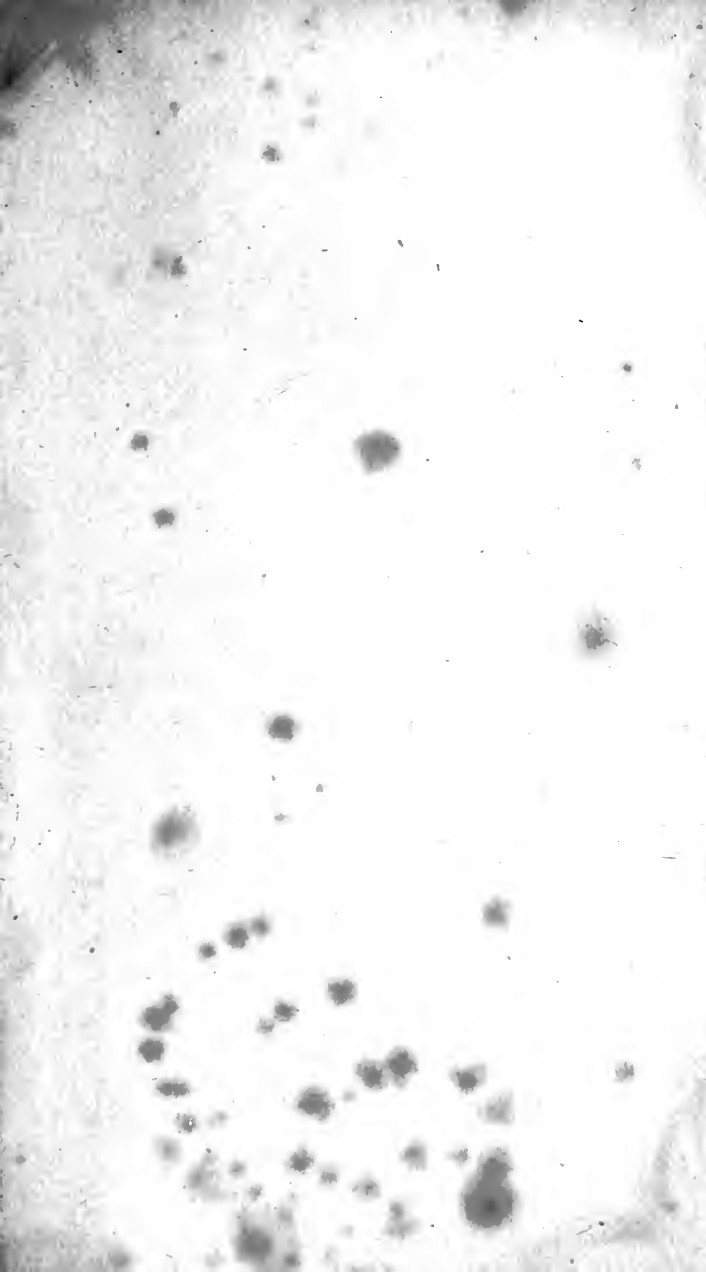
The house of Ferdinand lived in health, wealth, and peace, contrary to the last wish of Sebastian, when he invoked a curse to alight on it; and in process of time, the son of Orlando, the same which Adela had so often hung up in the tree, in his basket of her own weaving,

weaving, when in the island of Canary, ascended the throne of Spain.

It may be inferred from this account, that the crimes of the parents are not always inherent in their children, though it is a received opinion that they are. In support of the inference just drawn, where is there a character guilty of more crime than Sebastian, and where is there one possessed of more virtue than Adela, his only legitimate offspring.

Few minds are free from the sin of ambition; for there are few persons in the world who do not wish to be something greater than they are; but let aspiring man beware, for by that sin fell the angels, and by the sin of ambition fell the BRAZEN MASK!

FINIS.



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Brazen mask : a romance /



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